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ABSTRACT

This document is comprised of the two issues "Children our Concern" published in 1999-2000. This journal for Florida early childhood education practitioners provides information on current issues in early childhood education, educational practices, and activities of the Early Childhood Association of Florida (ECA of FL). Regular features in each issue include" "Did You Know?" a column to increase awareness of health and safety issues in early childhood programs; reviews of children's literature; a calendar of events; reports from ECA of FL officers; and information on ECA of FL activities. The summer 1999 issue features articles on strategies to meet the challenges of inclusion, dinosaur classroom activities, using music and laughter in education with young children, parenting, and science education. The winter 1999-2000 issue includes articles on promoting creativity, collaborative efforts to improve education for young children, toilet training, infant sleep positions, including children with special needs in Florida early childhood programs, and administrator credential requirements in Florida. (KB)

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CHILDREN OUR CONCERN

The Journal of the Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc.

Summer 1999
Volume XXIV, No. 1

Today's Children · Tomorrow's Future

Inside this issue:

- *1999 Conference pullout & Registration information*
- *Practical Strategies to Meet the Challenge of Inclusion*
- *1999 Florida Legislative Update*

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The Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA

The mission of the Early Childhood Association of Florida is to promote the quality of life, learning, and care of young children through leadership, advocacy and professional development of its members in order to enhance their work on behalf of young children and families.

The Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc. (ECA of Florida), formerly Florida Association On Children Under Six (FACUS), represents nearly 4,300 professionals, parents, and other community members who are concerned, interested, and actively involved in enhancing the quality of life for young children. The Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc. is an affiliate of The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA), and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Throughout this publication, references to the Early Childhood Association of Florida will not include the "Inc." designation, but it is expressly understood that the Early Childhood Association of Florida is incorporated properly with the State of Florida.

About *CHILDREN OUR CONCERN*

Children Our Concern is in its 23rd year as the publication of the Early Childhood Association of Florida/FACUS. Membership in the Association includes a subscription to *Children Our Concern.* There are two annual issues. The Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc. does not accept responsibility for statements of fact or opinion which appear in *Children Our Concern.* Acceptance of advertising does not represent the Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc.'s endorsement of any product or service, nor is the Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc. responsible for representation made by advertisers.

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CHILDREN OUR CONCERN

The Journal of the Early
Childhood Association
of Florida, Inc.

Volume XXIV, No. 1

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1999 Conference logo drawn by Pam Nash, Broward AEYC, ECA of FL Southeast Regional Representative

Issue 2, Volume XXIV, Summer 1999 of the Journal of the ECA of FL. This publication of the Early Childhood Association of Florida, 3049 Browning Street, Sarasota, Florida 34237, is published twice a year in Summer and Winter.

President's Letter

In September of 1998, the new Board of Directors of ECA of FL was installed amidst the confusion and ominous presence of Hurricane Georges. We had set forth on uncharted waters with a brand new crew of officers. We had eliminated some positions and added some new ones, including the two vice presidents and the four regional representatives. What an introduction to our year on the Board! All ended well as Georges skirted up the coast leaving us virtually untouched and the conference proceeded. We had a successful conference and we were ready for what was ahead of us. The new officers were eager to get started in their new positions.

It is now seven months later and as president I can assure you the Board has worked hard. The regional representatives and vice presidents have started work to increase visibility and communication to each of our affiliate chapters. Our committees are active and functioning well. We feel that you will be pleased with the new direction of ECA of FL.

The membership in ECA of FL keeps growing at such a rapid pace! It is the hard work of our affiliate leaders that has helped to sustain this growth. We have shared in a vision and changed the direction of our organization to meet head on the challenges around us. No one knows what the new millennium will bring, but I am sure we will continue to have the vision and foresight to meet whatever happens.

Your Executive and Advisory boards have worked many long and productive hours on your behalf. There are many ways we can do this and one of them is to establish a very definite public policy focus. We need to walk the halls of the State and Federal offices to get the message out that good quality care takes money, time, and commitment. This is a message they need to hear and we have the expertise and talent right on our Executive Board to get it done. Donna Shreve and Suzanne Gellens need your support and your help to tackle this monumental task.

As a member of ECA of FL you are part of one of the largest early childhood groups in the South, and with your support we can do great things in Florida for children and families.

One other way we can continue our upward journey is to collaborate and communicate with other agencies and organizations who have the same goals we do, to better the future of Florida's children. There are numerous other groups advocating for children. We must work together to speak in unison so our message is heard.

Serving Florida as your President has been a challenge as I learn to deal with the diverse needs of our organization. During this time I have had a wonderful opportunity to work with and learn from some of the most knowledgeable people in our field. Our future is secure as long as we do not ever lose sight of our goals, and speak out for the children we care for on a daily basis. They deserve the best and we will strive to assure that they get the very best that we can give.

Amy Y. Cordray

Donna Shreve (left) and Amy Cordray standing outside the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. after their interview on Ted Koppel's "Nightline."

Executive Director's Report

Recently, a long time member of ECA of FL said it was hard to justify to people in the early care and education field why it is important to belong to a professional organization. She could, of course, list the benefits: magazines, newsletters, scholarships, conferences, video lending library, insurance; but for some people these aren't enough. They can get similar items from other places in the community. What else could be derived from membership?

For me, this answer is easy. I can honestly say, being a part of my local affiliate the Early Childhood Association of Sarasota, the Early Childhood Association of Florida, The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has changed who I am and where I am going. I, like many of you, joined as soon as I arrived in Florida. I just paid my dues and attended a few meetings of the Hillsborough Association. I even remember presenting a workshop on using instruments in the classroom and participated in a children's event. Yet it wasn't until I became a director of a childcare center in Sarasota that I garnered the real benefits being offered. As I attended the meetings and volunteered for offices, I began to grow. The **REAL** benefits that I received aren't tangible; they are internal.

First, according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, all people crave socialization and acceptance among their peers. Nowhere was I so warmly received as in ECA of FL. I feel comfortable no matter where I am in the state, because the people all have the same "mentality" I have, the same direction. I don't have to probe "why" when someone says they have an "out of control child" in their classroom. I can empathize and perhaps relate how I handled a similar situation. I understand the fury of an angry parent or the hopefulness of an eager four-year-old. We have a camaraderie that is unspoken. So, I not only am comfortable with early care and education professionals, I have made many wonderful friends.

Professionally I have grown immensely. With each office I volunteered for, I received an education. The skills learned while being hospitality chair, programming vice president, president-elect, recording secretary, etc. taught me more than I could list. I found out how to organize, facilitate, seek out experts for advice, how to run a conference and much, much more. Each task gave me skills that were useful in my paying job. The more I did for the early childhood profession, the better teacher and director I became. One job complimented the next until I began to feel my confidence and self esteem grow.

These benefits of this avocation are by no means mine alone. I see this growth in those who have decided to participate at the state or regional level by volunteering. I see them advance in their workplace by acquiring skills of communication and a fierce drive for success. I see them become mentors and advocates, rising from one level of their life cycle to the next.

You get from this organization what you give. Each member can be content collecting journals. You can stop there and be content with the minimum benefits. Others can branch out, attending meetings and conferences. But to get the maximum effect, to garner the true profits of membership, you must get involved. Try it! Donate just an hour or two to your local affiliate. You'll be amazed at the results!

Suzanne Gellens

Early Childhood Association of Florida

44th Annual Conference

September 30 - October 2, 1999
Orlando, Florida • Radisson Twin Towers

Keynote Speakers:

Madelyn Swift, Guidance • Anna Moo, Music
Audrey Landers of PBS's Huggabug Club

SECA Representative's Report

The Southern Association on Children Under Six (now known as SECA) conference was held in Nashville, Tennessee. How befitting that we celebrate SECA's Golden Anniversary in the same city and state fifty years later. For two days the SECA Board of Directors met and made the following decisions: (1) SECA is a national, not a regional association. Our main focus is on Southern issues, because the South is very unique. (2) Next year the membership will receive two newsletters and three issues of our journal, *Dimensions*. (3) The candidates for President-Elect for this year are Phil Acord of Tennessee and Paul Wirtz of Kentucky. Watch your journal for their biographies and don't forget to vote. (4) Beginning in 2001, nominating committee members will rotate from state to state. The president of each state will select a person to serve on the committee. Florida's turn is in 2003.

Now more about the conference. Amy Cordray, Nancy Fraser Williams, Donna Shreve, Marguerite Orban, Suzanne Gellens and I attended the Leadership Workshop presented by the Forum for Early Childhood Organization and Leadership Development at the Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership. Dr. S. Marie McCarther and Dr. David Renz discussed Effective Team Building. Each participant took a SELF Leadership Practice Inventory. Our own president came out very effective in all areas. We were also asked to write the three most important trends, issues, and challenges that face SECA in the year 2000. Advocacy/Public Policy, Leadership and Membership were selected. In the end we found that these were not just challenges for SECA, but for the state and local affiliates also.

Amy Cordray, Nancy Fraser Williams and I attended the Public Policy Institute: Using Brain Research to Make a Difference for Children in the South, presented by Karen Hughes. In this institute we learned how to take the brain research and turn it into a sellable product – an eye-catching product that would make people who make decisions about young children take notice. She recommended the book Jump Start Your Brain, by Doug Hall. We all know that listening to classical music stimulates the brain, every brain needs four ounces of water every day, that red and yellow are also stimulating. But I did not know that peppermint also stimulates the brain. We need to remember that a baby's brain is under construction and we are the builders. Thursday night's general session started the conference off with the same topic that Dr. James Hymes used fifty years ago. However, this time Dr. Milly Cowles spoke on "What is Good Education for Young Children?" Dr. Cowles told us that a good education comes when: 1) We think about where children are now and where we want them to be when they leave us; 2) How we evaluate their progress; 3) We have a good developmentally appropriate environment for learning; and 4) We provide them with very high quality education.

Later that night we had a big birthday celebration for the Southern Early Childhood Association. Thirteen of the past presidents were introduced and given flowers. Three of our very own: Alma David (1969-70), Dr. Patricia S. Spaulding (1983-84), and Dr. Ann Levy (1991-93). Also at the conference were three ladies that attended the very first conference: Alma David, Mildred Vance, and Alma Mae Scarbough. Boy, the stories these ladies had to share were very interesting about how SECA had grown. During the birthday celebration the audience was entertained by the same group that entertained at the first conference – the world-renowned Fisk Jubilee Singers. The songs they sung really touched the hearts of the audience.

Rich Scofield, one of the conference co-chairs, was the closing keynote speaker. His speech was dynamite. Rich spoke to us about "Celebrating Children's Development Through Fun." Rich stated that children give us validation, motivation, and inspiration. Early care providers are making a difference. He also gave us seven ways to celebrate a child's development: (1) Use what we know about children's development to our advantage. (2) Be sensitive to others' feelings. Respect children and don't hurry them. (3) Empower children by creating a classroom where they have choices. (4) Provide structure and security. (5) Use humor and laughter. (6) Get excited about their milestones. (7) We need to have FUN. Working with children is a process, not a product.

That night was very special. The Early Childhood Association of Florida honored our Past President, Dr. Ann Levy, who was chosen as SECA's Outstanding Member of the year. We held a reception in her honor. Ann was delighted to see so many friends and colleagues.

Saturday morning Jonah Edelman spoke. Sunday morning the Board of Directors ended with a very positive decision. We selected Glenda Bean as our permanent Executive Director. Congratulations, Glenda, from the Florida Association!

Join SECA next year in Birmingham, Alabama, April 6 – 8, 2000. The theme will be, "In Concert for Children."

Beverly Oglesby

In Memoriam
Loretta M. Hatfield

On October 7, 1998, Loretta Hatfield, a mother, grandmother, special friend of many, and advocate of children and families, succumbed to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Her bravery, courage and humor sustained her to the very end as she fought to survive this unrelenting disease. "Retta's" wit, wisdom, laughter, beautiful smile, and love and care for human life, both young and old, made her a true blessing in many lives.

During the early part of her career, Retta's academic and professional life was centered around Purdue University, in West Lafayette, Indiana. She received her B.S. in 1969 and M.S. in 1974, and in 1980 she earned her Education Specialist degree from Indiana University. Throughout this period, Retta had many positions in the Department of Child Development and Family Relations at Purdue, including Lead Teacher in the Child Development Laboratory, Academic Counseling Coordinator, Assistant Director for Training and Program Development, Instructor, and Student Teacher Coordinator.

After leaving Purdue and moving to Greensboro, North Carolina, she served as Director of Undergraduate Curriculum from 1985 to 1988 at the Department of Child Development and Family Relations at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In 1989, she joined the Kaplan School Supply Corporation as the Director of Creative Development. In this position, she influenced program development, led and supported many projects, and co-authored creative teaching materials. Retta traveled widely in America and Europe as part of her job, teaching and training many others. She held this position until she could no longer work.

Professionally, Retta was very involved in many state, regional, national and international early childhood associations. She served as a validator, commissioner and mentor for NAEYC. NAEYC held a very special place in her heart. She was a member of SECA and participated in many SECA conferences, presenting and exhibiting. Many of you will remember her as making crazy paper hats and presenting at the ECA of FL conferences for many years. She had a wonderful smile and an infectious laugh.

Even though her professional life was overflowing with activity and achievement, Retta's personal life was just as enriched with friends, family, events and memorable times. Antiques, cooking, travel, her "herb group," church activities, long-term friendships and close family ties truly completed a "life well-lived." When it was apparent that ALS would claim her, and others might give up and wait for the end, Retta went hot-air ballooning. Such was her outlook and style.

As we remember Retta, her influence is far reaching, her love and passion for life not ending. She will be sorely missed by her children, Brett and Brigett, and their families, her sister Pat and her children, and by her countless professional and personal friends. Peace and love, my dear friend. Till we meet again.

Dottie Ports
Past President, ECA of FL

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A scholarship fund has been set up in Loretta's name to provide additional training for early childhood directors and administrators. For donations or information, contact the Loretta Hatfield Scholarship Fund, c/o Mrs. Brigett Williams, 6447 Old Oak Ridge Road, Greensboro, NC 29410.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, September 30, 1999
ECA of FL Advisory Board Meeting
Radisson Twin Towers, Orlando, FL
941-951-0606

October 20-22
Florida Children's Forum Conference
St. Petersburg, FL
850-681-7002 for information

November 10-13
NAEYC National Conference
New Orleans, LA
1-800-424-2460

April 6-8, 2000
SECA Conference
Birmingham, AL
1-800-305-SECA

Early Childhood Association of Florida

ECA of Florida congratulates these Floridians for their contributions to SECA! Floridians helped form the organization in 1949-50. Florida was the first state to gain affiliation in SACUS in 1959!

SECA PRESIDENTS FROM FLORIDA

1953-54	Dr. Ralph Witherspoon
1960-61	Barbara Finck
1969-70	Dr. Alma David
1975-76	Ruth Jefferson
1983-84	Dr. Patricia Smith Spaulding
1991-93	Dr. Ann Levy
1997-99	Suzanne Gellens

SECA OUTSTANDING MEMBER AWARDS

1976	Dr. Alma David
1982	Ruth Jefferson
1999	Dr. Ann Levy

SECA REPRESENTATIVES THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

Dr. Sarah Lou Hammond
Dr. Alma Williams David
Anita Griffiths
La Mittice Person
Sylvia Carothers
Helen L. Dunn
Doris McIntyre
E.M. McCloud
Barbara Finck
Ina Steele
Jane Black
Dr. Patricia Smith Spaulding
Marion Scarborough
Ruth Jefferson
Dr. Don Rapp
Alice Taglauer
Dr. Mary Virginia Peaslee
Dr. Ann Levy
Dr. Jacqueline Clemens
Suzanne Gellens
Beverly Oglesby

HELEN HARLEY AWARD

1980	Nedra K. Hill
1987	Patti Faircloth
1994	Donna Shreve

CONFERENCES IN FLORIDA

1953	Daytona Beach	1975	Bal Harbour
1960	Miami Beach	1986	Orlando
1969	Jacksonville	1995	Orlando

MARIAN HAMILTON AWARD

1997	Venice Area Association on Children Under Six

EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA AFFILIATE PRESIDENTS 1999

Big Sun	Jan Martin
Broward	Elizabeth Meyers
Charlotte	Suzi Jamrog
Columbia	Sheryll Walker
DeSoto	Rhoda Biller
East Pasco	Caroline Spanger
Florida Keys	Carolyn McCloud
Gadsden	Ardella Frison
Heartland	Charlene Edwards
Hillsborough	Gege Kreischer
Indian River	Janice Streetman
Lake	Annamaria Linton
Lee	Kate Sroka
Leon	Marla Furst
Manatee	Janet Hamstra
North Central Florida	Elise Webb
North Florida	Darlene Gore
Northwest Florida	Betsy Werre
Okaloosa/Walton	Gwen Gregory
Orange	Cinderella Jens
Palm Beach	Amy Crease
Pinellas	Gerri Carboni
Polk	Vanessa Hammill
Sarasota	Judith Vander Wilt
South Florida	Cathy Powers
Space Coast	Lynn Carter
Treasure Coast	Sherri Piasecki
Venice	Kirstina Ordetx
West Pasco	Jan Tomascewski

Provisional Affiliates

Hernando
Collier
Citrus
Sunshine
Calhoun/Liberty

Happy 50th Birthday SECA!

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1999 Florida Legislative Update

The 1999 Florida Legislature passed momentous early childhood legislation. Federal and state commitment to devolution continued in school readiness legislation, providing more local control of services. The Gold Seal Quality Child Care Bill provides a wide range of quality enhancement initiatives, expands eligibility for subsidized child care, and creates a new category of care, large family child care homes. In addition, the Legislature dedicated an additional $37 million to subsidized child care and an additional $1 million to Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) scholarships. WAGES legislation also expanded child care funding to include care and supervision of recipients' 12-17 year old children with special needs.

SCHOOL READINESS LEGISLATION

The Florida Partnership for School Readiness was created and assigned to the Executive Office of the Governor for administrative purposes. The partnership will be responsible for adopting and coordinating programmatic, administrative, and fiscal policies and standards for all school readiness programs. These programs include Florida First Start, Even Start, Prekindergarten Early Intervention, Head Start, Migrant Prekindergarten, Title 1, Subsidized Child Care, and Teen Parent programs. Recommendations to the Legislature for combining funding streams into a School Readiness Trust Fund must be received by February 15, 2000. These must include a recommendation for the inclusion or noninclusion of the Pre-kindergarten Disabilities Program and funding. The Partnership also has responsibility for approving local coalitions and plans, developing a method whereby a coalition can serve more than two counties, developing performance standards and outcome measures, awarding incentives, issuing waivers, and adopting a statewide system for measuring school readiness.

Eighteen- to 25-member local coalitions will oversee local governance of the school readiness system. Members of the coalition must represent the public and private sector, and these individuals are charged with developing a plan for implementing the School Readiness program. Plans must incorporate the performance standards and outcome measures developed by the Partnership, include system support and direct enhancement services, and designate a fiscal agent (a coalition that is not a legally established corporate entity must contract with a fiscal agent).

The legislation also revises the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services. It creates the State Coordinating Council for School Readiness, a 15 member advisory council to the Partnership for School Readiness charged to recommend methods for coordinating programs and increasing public-private partnerships in school readiness programs. The Council will be repealed in 2002.

In addition, the School Readiness legislation creates an Articulation Coordinating Committee to establish a career path for school readiness-related professions. The Partnership is directed to work with the Commissioner of Education, the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, and the Education Standards Commission to assess the extent and nature of instruction available for personnel in early childhood education and care. Their findings will be the basis of the work of the Articulation Coordinating Committee.

GOLD SEAL QUALITY CHILD CARE BILL

This piece of legislation addresses a wide range of issues and programs. It provides additional incentives for Gold Seal Programs (programs accredited by state-recognized accrediting bodies). The legislation allows Gold Seal child care providers to be reimbursed at the (full) market rate for child care services for children who are eligible for Subsidized Child Care. In addition, a licensed or exempt Gold Seal child care facility is considered an educational institution for purpose of qualifying for exemption from ad valorem tax, and any real estate used and owned as a child care facility which operates in an enterprise zone is exempt from taxation. Furthermore, Gold Seal child care facilities that provide health insurance to their employees are exempt from the sales tax on educational materials.

The Gold Seal Quality Child Care Bill also raises the eligibility level for admission to 200 percent of poverty for the Child Care Executive Partnership Program. The Executive Partnership Program provides matching funds for child care purchasing pools that operate in 44 of Florida's 67 counties. It is designed to help employers meet the needs of low-income working parents. Employers and community groups raise funds that are matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the state.

This legislation addresses several licensing issues. It creates a new category of care, the large family child care home. It allows care for up to 12 children (with no more than 4 children less than 24 months of age) with two adult caregivers or a

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By Alisa S. Ghazvini, Ph.D., Staff Coordinator, State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services, Tallahassee, Florida

maximum of 8 children from birth to 24 months of age. Operators of large family child care homes must have been licensed family child care providers for at least two years and have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or equivalent for one year.

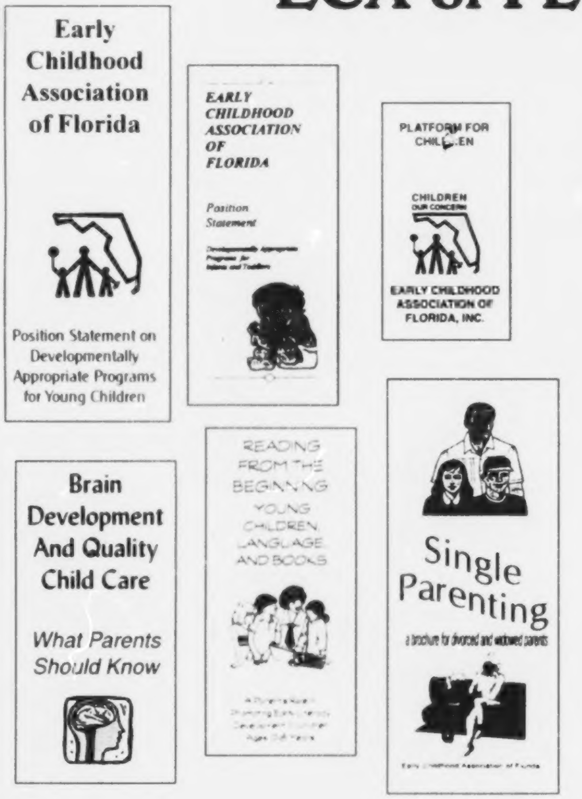
Another licensing issue addressed in the legislation is increased training requirements. The establishment of a credential for child care facility directors is required by January 1, 2000. This credential will be a minimum standard for licensure by January 1, 2003. There are also increased training requirements for child care center personnel (increased to 40 clock hours) and family child care personnel (increased to 30 hours). The Department of Children and Families, in conjunction with the Department of Health, is also directed to develop minimum standards for specialized child care facilities for the care of mildly ill children.

In addition, the Gold Seal Quality Child Care Bill establishes a system for behavioral, observational, and developmental assessment of young children, creating levels of screening and assessment. Furthermore, it directs the establishment of a Warm-Line for the purpose of providing assistance and consultation to child care centers and family child care homes regarding health, developmental, disability, and special needs issues of the children they are serving. A program was also established to award collaboration grants (with funding for required match) to assist local agencies in securing federal Early Head Start Program grants.

For further information, you may obtain copies of legislation by visiting the Florida Legislature On-Line at: http://www.leg.state.fl.us.

Ann Levy, ECA of FL Past President, and Suzanne Gellens, ECA of FL Executive Director, are on the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services and will serve on the new State Coordinating Council for School Readiness.

ECA of FL Brochures



Early Childhood Association of Florida

Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Programs for Young Children

EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA

Position Statement

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CHILDREN OUR CONCERN

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A letter to ECA of FL

Dear Suzanne,

I just returned from our Collier County Pre-K interagency meeting where the new bills (Senate and House Bills) on School Readiness were reviewed and discussed.

I wanted to thank you for writing the position papers we received that came from your office. I especially want to focus on the Assessments for Early Childhood Readiness paper. It was comprehensive and clear. It was well stated and explicit. I concur with everything you pointed out in your background piece.

However, I wanted to know how this piece is being used. Is this being sent to our legislators? Has there been a hue and cry over the unacceptable standards for measuring school readiness written into the Senate bill ? Who wrote these anyhow? It goes against any professional notion of how children learn, and is most inappropriate as you so clearly point out. Are there any early childhood people advising this committee? Do you have their ear? Does anyone in the field?

I may be naive, and at the risk of seeming presumptuous, I would like to add to your well couched paper another thought. Under the paragraph marked recommendation: I would like to suggest that instead of testing children for kindergarten readiness, we take a strong look at the readiness of those teachers to teach kindergarten children!!! Any qualified professional early childhood teacher would be especially trained to work appropriately with children who come to them regardless of what they bring. All children at the age of five should be granted access to the public school kindergarten. Every teacher teaching these children should be eligible through training and understanding of how young children learn, to develop a curriculum that would address varying degrees of development at this point. Readiness is a state of being! It happens gradually when a child is in an environment that nurtures children to become ready! Each child has their own timetable.

I suggest that we also think in terms of upgrading the requirements for teachers of young children in the preschools, so that they are exposing children to the experiences that stimulate children's curiosity and intellect... and not focusing prematurely on academic skill development. Perhaps when we offer a professional wage to teachers of three and four-year-olds, we will get teachers who understand that children going into kindergarten vary in their growth, and if given time and support, not drill and pressure, they will thrive and become learners as they mature and go forward into the academic world of formal education.

This policy, therefore, not only affects the kindergarten child, as you know. It puts pressure on the preschools and early care and education centers to focus on academic learning at three and four, long before most children are ready or are able to do so. This assures certain failure for many children and they begin to feel they are inadequate and even that they are stupid. In essence, by forcing children to learn things required to enter kindergarten in this bill, we are in fact teaching stupidity to children, rather than preparing them for success!

I look to you for advice as to how to proceed to educate the legislators in Florida, as well as the parents of young children about the way young children really learn to read and write and know their numbers and letters and colors. Can the profession speak with one voice that the literature shows over and over that first and foremost we must put highly qualified teachers in the classes of young children? These professionals must be in charge of supporting the growth of each child as they work with them individually over a period of time. That is the role of a qualified professional. It is NOT the role of legislators or parents to tell the teachers what to teach!

On the one hand, the legislators have asked us to support the Gold Seal Child Care Bill that exemplifies quality child care and education. On the other hand, the legislators are asking for support of a screening system that will sabotage any efforts made to work with children appropriately before they enter school. Does not the right hand know what the left hand is doing? They are, in effect, negating one another! Can you ask the legislators on this committee to look at the Gold Seal criteria, look at NAEYC accreditation for kindergarten, and look at Bill 366 urging adoption of a uniform screening system for measuring school readiness? Bill 366 is incongruous with the best thinking of the profession. Please offer the committee the benefit of your expertise or the expertise of any other professional who has labored for decades to promote good quality early childhood education.

I would appreciate any action you can take on this critical issue. Feel free to forward this letter to anyone who might be helpful in getting these standards eliminated.

Thanks,

Miriam Silver, Ed.D.
Naples, Florida

Editor's Note – ECA of FL position statements available in the Business Office: *Articulation of Early Childhood Course Work; Assessments for Early Childhood Readiness; Chicken Pox Vaccine; Wages, Benefits and Working Conditions for Early Care and Education Staff; Actual Cost of Early Care and Education,* and *Lower Child/Adult Ratios and Classroom Group Sizes.*

The Long-term Plan for Florida's Early Intervention System

A brief background

In Florida, the lead agency for implementing Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Public Law 105-17, is the Department of Health/Children's Medical Services. Part C (formerly Part H) of the federal law allows the development of state systems that serve infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities or established conditions that may result in developmental delays.

In 1997-98, the Department of Health identified the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers, a citizens council which serves in an advisory capacity to the lead agency, as the entity that would develop a long-term plan for the early intervention system in Florida. The Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers chartered a process to identify a diverse group of individuals from around the state, representing key constituencies in the early intervention system, to develop recommendations that would serve as the framework for the long-term plan for Florida's early intervention system. This group, known as the Key Stakeholders Council, developed 41 recommendations that have been incorporated into the ***Long-term Plan for Florida's Early Intervention System.***

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN

The Long-term Plan for Florida's Early Intervention System includes these key points:

- Develops a model of shared governance with the state lead agency, Department of Health, Children's Medical Services, the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers, and local communities through defining clear roles and responsibilities and the development of community based ***Regional Policy Councils***;
- Recognizes and builds on the strengths of the current system, preserving the components that are working well, while creating mechanisms to open the system for greater public input and ***problem solving at the community level***;
- Addresses program effectiveness through the development and implementation of local community plans, enhances the role of the lead agency in monitoring and quality assurance, and institutes and on-going process for improvement of data collection;
- Increases administrative efficiency and cost-effectiveness through a revised funding methodology for allocation of funds
- Involves families as partners at all levels of policy and decision making, including greater representation on the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers and the Regional Policy Councils ... and as key informants in the monitoring and quality assurance of programs. (Excerpted from the ***Long-Term Plan for Florida's Early Intervention System.***)

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

During the Fall of 1998, the Department of Health, Children's Medical Services disseminated a *Request for Proposals* to local communities in defined regions of the state, seeking the development of the ***Regional Policy Councils*** *and a* ***Community Plan*** *for achieving the requirements outlined in Florida's Long-term Plan,* phased in over a three-year period. Community interagency groups submitted their initial plans in February of 1999, which were reviewed by the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers.

Phase 1 of the Community Plans called for the establishment of the Regional Policy Councils and definition of the representatives to serve on the Councils, which may be different from region to region of the State. Regions are at various levels of development – some have a ***Regional Policy Council*** established and operating, while others are still in the process of completing the selection of council members.

The long-range goal for the community planning process by the end of year three is that each service area will have in place a functional, community-based Early Intervention System reflected in written policy and procedures.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT EARLY CHILDHOOD PROVIDERS?

Since there is a continuing effort to include children who have disabilities or who are at risk of developmental delays in typical childcare settings, early childhood professionals should be aware of the development of policies by the Regional Policy Councils. Awareness allows early childhood professionals to be alerted to possible changes in the local community regarding serving children with

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Information compiled by Bettianne S. Ford, Health Committee, Early Childhood Association of Florida

Florida's Early Intervention System, continued

disabilities, and also give them an opportunity to provide valuable information from a hands-on perspective to the members of the Regional Policy Council through their representative member.

HOW CAN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS KEEP UP TO DATE?

There are a variety of ways early childhood professionals can become informed and stay updated on the actions of the Regional Policy Council in their area:

- Ask a representative from the ***Regional Policy Council*** to make a presentation at your local Early Childhood Association meeting;
- Designate someone from your local Early Childhood Association to keep updated on what the ***Regional Policy Council*** is developing and report on it at your Board and Early Childhood Association meetings;
- Report on the activities of the ***Regional Policy Council*** in your Early Childhood Association newsletter in an ongoing manner to keep members informed; and
- Be aware that the meetings of the ***Regional Policy Council*** are open to the public and that you may attend, not to vote, but to gain awareness and understanding of policy development.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE REGIONAL POLICY COUNCIL IN YOUR AREA CONTACT:

Daytona Beach Area Regional Policy Council
Patty Naquin .... 904/255-6475 ext. 2323

Ft. Lauderdale Area Regional Policy Council
Sharon Conley 954/ 713-3197

Ft. Myers Area Regional Policy Council
Michael Toops 941/ 674-4652

Gainesville Area Regional Policy Council
Silvia Ferguson 352/ 334-4060

Gainesville Area Regional Policy Council
Nancy Haynes .... 352/ 726-1931 ext. 2850

Jacksonville Area Regional Policy Council
Laura Ballet 904/ 390-3665

Key West Area Regional Policy Council
Joseph Barker .... 305/ 292-7150 ext. 32

Melbourne Area Regional Policy Council
Sue Cannon 407/ 752-4784

Miami/ Dade Area Regional Policy Council
Paula Lalinde 305/ 243-6123

Orlando Area Regional Policy Council
Cindi Kopelman ..... 407/ 317-7430 ext. 109

Pensacola Area Regional Policy Council
Rod Kendig 850/ 434-8131

Sarasota Area Regional Policy Council
Shelly Rine 941/ 917-6984

St. Petersburg Area Regional Policy Council
Patti Miller 727/ 929-2626

Tallahassee Area Regional Policy Council
Linda Wright .... 850/ 482-1213 ext. 213

Tampa Area Regional Policy Council
Diane Smith 941/ 708-9303

West Palm Area Regional Policy Council
No Chair at this time

ECA of FL is on the World Wide Web.
Get the latest conference information at:
http://ECAofFL.org

Practical Strategies to Meet the Challenge of Inclusion

Inclusion. This is a term that raises the eyebrows of even the most seasoned early childhood education (ECE) teacher. At its most basic level, inclusion refers to the process of providing early care and education for young children with disabilities in community programs designed primarily for children without disabilities. Unfortunately, inclusion may provide the ECE teacher with a less than positive introduction to a young child with disabilities. Sometimes it is a reminder of the lack of skills or absence of knowledge to meet the unique needs of a young child with disabilities. And sometimes, the mention of inclusion will prompt a reaction that indicates a significant aversion to inclusion (For example, one might hear, "If I wanted to teach children with disabilities, I would have gone into special education."). Similarly, many ECE teachers often report that inclusion is something they fear.

Frequently, inclusion begins with the placement of a young child with disabilities with little or no advance planning or knowledge and no input from the ECE teacher. Often, the news that a young child with disabilities will be included in an early care and education program comes as a surprise announcement. A teacher might be headed out to the playground with a group of energetic 3-year-olds, and the Program Director comes by to let the teacher know that a new child will be included in the morning... and, oh, by the way, she has Down syndrome. Or the Coordinator informs the teacher at the end of a long day that another parent has requested him to be the teacher for her 4-year-old child... and he uses a wheelchair. Or the teacher receives notice that a new child with autism will be included in the program on a part-time basis, with little additional information about the child or her strengths or needs... and, by the way, she starts next week. These are not uncommon circumstances and reflect the experiences of many ECE teachers who are working hard to provide excellent early care and education for young children all across the country.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) is a hallmark for best practice in ECE (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), and most ECE teachers are well versed in DAP. However, many ECE teachers believe that they don't have the skills, knowledge, or preparation to make specific accommodations and adjustments in the curriculum for young children with disabilities. Most ECE teachers understand the need to include all children and make accommodations every day to insure the participation of all children in group activities and play settings. Equally important, though, many ECE teachers feel that they are not well equipped to meet the many needs of young children with disabilities and their families (Eiserman, Shisler, & Healey, 1995).

Nevertheless, it is a growing reality that inclusion is happening every day, in every state, and probably will expand significantly in coming years. Over 50% of 3 to 5-year-old preschool children with disabilities were provided special education services in general education settings (i.e., inclusive settings) two years ago (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). In addition, the federal law, Americans with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA), requires that infants and toddlers with disabilities be provided early intervention services in natural environments (such as community child care centers) and that 3 to 5-year-old preschoolers be provided special education services alongside children who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. In addition, the Americans with Disabilities Act requires child care programs to make "reasonable accommodations" for children with disabilities.

However, along with the reality of inclusion being supported by federal law and by the growth of inclusion in the early childhood years, there are a number of practical concerns. Because it is so important to provide meaningful and positive early experiences for all young children, these concerns need to be addressed. Thus, we have highlighted some of the concerns ECE teachers have expressed about inclusion and then provide practical strategies that will help ECE teachers as they work to meet the challenge of inclusion.

CONCERNS AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Concern: Can I really meet the instructional and developmental needs of young children with disabilities? My program is a busy, noisy place designed for children without disabilities.

Practical Strategies: Traditionally, it has been believed that young children with disabilities need more highly-structured programs than do typically developing children to achieve their maximum potential. However, teachers in the field of early childhood special education are increasingly recognizing that young

By Dr. Mary Frances Hanline, Department of Special Education, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida and Dr. Steve Daley, Sacramento State University, Sacramento, California. Photos were taken at Creative Preschool in Tallahassee, Florida.

children with disabilities can learn in natural environments; that is, in the same environments as young children without disabilities. Play activities and routines experienced by children developing typically on a daily basis are now recognized as an appropriate setting in which young children with disabilities can grow and develop (Cook, Tessier, & Klein, 1996).

Therapeutic, as well as educational activities, can occur during typical early childhood activities. For example, a child with physical disabilities can receive physical therapy designed to improve the child's ability to sit independently while a teacher is singing songs with a small group of children. Sociodramatic play activities provide an ideal setting in which to help a child with language delays learn to talk with other children. Children with fine motor challenges can receive occupational therapy during snack with other children and/or during block play. In fact, having typical models may enhance the motivation of the child with disabilities and provide an opportunity for children without disabilities to be "teachers" by assisting the child with disabilities.

Providing learning activities for children with disabilities in natural settings may require some adaptations, however. A child with movement difficulties may require warm water for water play if cold water makes movement more difficult. A child with a visual disability may need to be seated closer to the teacher than other children when listening to and talking about books; and a child with a hearing impairment may need to be seated at a table that allows him to see the other children (as well as the teacher) in order to see the faces of others when they are talking. Some children may need materials (e.g., crayons) that are larger, smaller, or lighter in weight than the other children's materials. The particular adaptations required for each child can be determined on an individual basis in consultation with parents, special educators, and therapists involved with the child.

Children with and without disabilities enjoy looking at books together at Creative Preschool in Tallahassee, Florida.

Concern: I don't think young children with disabilities can participate in my program since they often aren't learning the same thing as their peers who do not have disabilities. Won't their presence disrupt the on-going routines and learning activities of other children? Shouldn't they be in separate programs?

Practical Strategies: Most children with disabilities progress through the same developmental stages as other children (Hanson, 1997) and, therefore, can benefit from the activities that typically occur in the lives of children without disabilities. Schedules, activities, and routines already established in ECE programs usually do not need major changes to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities. Accommodations that allow children with disabilities to participate usually can be made without disrupting the on-going activities of children without disabilities.

As examples, two children of different developmental levels can play side by side in a tub of bird seed, miniature birds, and a variety of bowls, cups, and spoons. Each child can be involved in the activity at an individually appropriate level. One child may be learning to reach out and grasp a handful of bird seed, while another is involved in pretending to feed a family of baby birds. In a block center, one child may be learning to stack three blocks, while another is building a house with a garage that houses a miniature car. Children with and without disabilities can easily play together within a sociodramatic center. One child may be engaging in sensorimotor play, putting pretend food in and out of the refrigerator; while other children are involved in preparing breakfast prior to heading out for a day of work at the office.

In addition, some children may require scheduling modifications or additional assistance at particular times. That is, children with health-related disabilities may need a longer nap than other children. Children with motor challenges may take longer to eat. It may take some children more time to physically move from one activity to another and some may require full assistance (e.g., be carried or be put into a wheelchair) to move from one area of the classroom to another or to respond to a fire drill. Careful consideration of each staff member's responsibilities during these times and a creative and flexible approach to scheduling can prevent these needs from becoming problems. For example, a child who requires more time and/or assistance to eat lunch may leave her center activity before the other children, receiving assistance from the teacher who is responsible for getting the lunch tables ready. The teacher could assist the child in getting to her seat and talk with the child, allowing her to begin eating while the teacher prepares the tables for lunch.

Concern: I think the children without disabilities will tease and make fun of children with disabilities. The children who do not have disabilities won't want to be friends with or provide help to young children with disabilities.

Practical Strategies: Many young children have questions about disabilities that their friends have, and it is important that the teacher answer these questions honestly and use language appropriate to the developmental level of the child asking the questions. Including information about similarities between a child with disabilities and their peers, as well as information about how the child without disabilities can be a friend to the child with disabilities, is helpful. For example, when a child asks, "Why does Jacob use a wheelchair," the teacher may reply, "Jacob uses a wheelchair because his legs aren't strong enough for him to walk, but Jacob uses his wheelchair to get to different places, just like you use your legs." Or when a child says, "Jessica doesn't talk," the teacher may reply, "That's right. She hasn't learned how to talk yet. But we can help her let us know what she wants by looking at the picture cards she shows us."

When ECE teachers celebrate diversity and create an atmosphere of acceptance in the classroom, they have done important work for including a child with disabilities in the program. The Anti-Bias Curriculum (Derman-Sparks, 1989), published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), is a useful guide for teaching young children to recognize and appreciate differences and for developing a positive understanding of disabilities. As examples, an anti-bias program might feature pictures including people with disabilities involved in everyday activities, inviting visitors who have disabilities for different classroom activities, and including dolls with disabilities in play activities.

Young children will notice individual differences, but that doesn't need to develop into teasing or rejection. Before the child with disabilities joins the class, you may want to have an honest discussion with the other children about the child's unique characteristics or individual learning needs. For example, if a child who uses a hearing aid is to join the program, peers may benefit from seeing and wearing an actual hearing aid and from role playing learning how to get the attention of a child with a hearing impairment (e.g., by tapping the child on the shoulder, by making eye contact before talking, etc.). In addition, some teachers have found allowing children without disabilities to "experience" disabilities, as well as allowing children access to adaptive equipment, quite helpful, as they can help to demystify the disability. For example, children may experience visual disabilities by wearing blindfolds while attempting to eat a snack or be allowed an opportunity to sit in an adaptive chair or be pushed in a wheelchair. When we focus our attention on the whole child, the disability becomes only part of the definition of the child, and the children in the classroom will acknowledge this and reflect your respect for the young child with disabilities in the program. When a positive attitude permeates the atmosphere, young children become friends, regardless of disability status.

Concern: Won't the children without disabilities imitate developmentally immature behaviors and learn bad habits from young children with disabilities?

Practical Strategies: Over the years, many ECE teachers, administrators, and parents have expressed concern that children will learn bad habits from children with disabilities. This simply doesn't happen. There are no reports in the professional literature to support this concern (Straub & Peck, 1994). Time after time, children develop at their expected rate in inclusive settings and don't imitate children with disabilities. However, if adults see this happening, it is important to attempt to understand why this is occurring and respond accordingly. If the imitation appears to be done to tease the child with disabilities, teachers may need to speak with this child about her behavior. For example, a child may imitate an unusual gait of a child with cerebral palsy. The teacher should explain to the child that this is not appropriate ("We don't make fun of our friends.") and explain ways the child can help the child with the disability (e.g., hold her friend's hand when they are walking, walk slowly alongside the child with the disability). If the imitation appears to be a way the child is attempting to play or communicate with the child with disabilities, the teacher may want to encourage the imitative behavior as a way of helping form friendships. As an example, a child may crawl alongside a friend with a disability who cannot walk when the children are pretending to go shopping together. This type of imitation typically will not occur outside of the particular situation in which it occurred.

Concern: Don't young children with disabilities require much more teacher time? Won't they be taking away from the time I have to interact with and instruct all the children in my program?

Practical Strategies: Of course, young children with disabilities do require time from their teachers, but so does every child. When a child with disabilities is included in a program, planning time with specialists and parents may be needed. These individuals can provide you with needed assistance. Inclusion doesn't mean that the ECE teacher must figure out everything alone. The teacher is one member of a team that plans to meet the needs of the child. Speech-language pathologists, special education teachers, physical therapists, and occupational therapists can help assure that children and adults in an inclusive program have successful experiences. Most children with disabilities will be receiving services from professionals in community agencies, and these professionals can help. If children and families are not yet receiving services, ECE teachers can contact their local school systems, community mental health programs, and therapeutic and rehabilitation departments of local hospitals to assist families to begin receiving services. Pediatricians, telephone counseling and referral services, and child care referral services also may be a source of information about services and programs.

Concern: As an ECE teacher, I don't think I can provide for the many and varied needs of young children with disabilities.

Practical Strategies: ECE teachers have a long history of accommodating the wide variation in "typical" development. However, staff development is an important element for successful inclusion. Appropriate support and education for ECE teachers is already in place in many programs, centers, and schools. In many settings, adding topics to facilitate inclusion has been made without too much difficulty (Hanline, 1990). People who conduct staff education activities may be found in community programs and agencies such as universities, school districts, organizations made up of parents of children with disabilities (e.g., Parent to Parent), and nonprofit agencies that provide services to people with disabilities (e.g., Easter Seal, The ARC). Individuals who are involved with these agencies and programs are usually happy to share their knowledge and experience to facilitate the understanding of and inclusion of children with disabilities.

At Creative Preschool in Tallahassee, playing outdoors together is a favorite activity of children with and without disabilities.

Concern: I'm concerned that young children with disabilities will be a burden because they upset the optimum adult-child ratio required by high quality early childhood programs.

Practical Strategies: This concern highlights an issue of best practice in ECE. The guidelines of NAEYC may be followed when including young children with disabilities in ECE programs, and staff-child ratios are well-established by NAEYC to reflect best practice. NAEYC guidelines provide for staff-child ratios of two adults for up to 16 three-year-old children (1:8), two adults for groups of not more than 20 four-year-old children (1:10), and two adults for up to 25 kindergartners (1:12.5). While the young child with disabilities may require the assistance of specialists, consultants, or a paraprofessional at specific times of the day, the overall staff-child ratio doesn't need to be different because a child with disabilities has been included in the program.

Concern: I don't think parents of children want children with disabilities in their children's programs. Won't they fear that their children with be negatively affected by the presence of children with disabilities?

Practical Strategies: Young children with disabilities haven't been included in some ECE programs. But when parents of children without disabilities are asked if they value having children with disabilities in their child's program, they consistently support inclusion. Many of the children's parents have stated that inclusion allowed their children's sensitivity and acceptance of individual differences to increase through contact with children with disabilities. Equally important, parents consistently report that inclusion has had no negative effects on their children's learning and development (Galant & Hanline, 1993).

Parents of both groups of children, however, are usually more positive about inclusion when they are involved in the planning process. Including parents on planning committees and in education activities may promote more parental support. In addition, parents may need to be educated in a similar fashion as staff. Parents can receive information in parent meetings, in newsletters, and from information posted on parent bulletin boards. Agencies identified earlier can usually provide speakers and written information that may be useful

Concern: Won't parents of children with disabilities fear that their child will not receive adequate services in inclusive settings?

Practical Strategies: Like all parents, parents of young children with disabilities want the best for their children. They are fully aware that their children have unique needs but once their children are involved in an inclusive ECE program, parents typically feel that their children benefit from and receive adequate services in the inclusive setting. However, some parents have reported that access to family support services are often less available in community programs designed for children without disabilities (McLean & Hanline, 1990). Thus, ECE teachers may need to work to assure that families find adequate support and services available from agencies in the community. In addition to the resources and agencies discussed earlier, two excellent sources of information regarding family supports are the local school district special education resource staff and the early intervention coordinator for the local infant-toddler program.

SUMMARY

As we witness the continued expansion of inclusion across the country, the ECE teacher needs to feel comfortable to ask for assistance to make inclusion work. Further, it is important for teachers to admit to and talk about apprehensions they may feel. Trying something different and unfamiliar is often very stressful and somewhat frightening. Inclusion was never meant to be a "trial by fire" for ECE teachers.

ECE teachers need to inform administrators of their concerns before the young child with disabilities is placed in the program. Seeking to provide a positive and meaningful experience for a young child with disabilities takes team work, collaboration, and the development of partnerships in the community. Creativity, flexibility, and willingness on the part of staff and families to try something new also help make inclusion successful. For inclusion to become commonplace, every community early care and education program needs to examine their policies for inclusion and develop a plan for insuring that all children can grow together in an inclusive community. Teachers, other professionals, and parents working together form the beginning of successful inclusion. Appropriate preparation for staff through inservice and preservice activities also lays the foundation for success. Inclusion can be a positive experience for ECE teachers as well as a productive developmental and social experience for all children.

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Technology in Early Childhood

It should come as a surprise to no one that computers and software are now integral parts of many early childhood classrooms in the United States today. A few short years ago, I was teaching in a public school in Charleston, South Carolina and I can remember how I held in awe the idea that children would one day be able to actually contact other children across the country and across the world from their very own classrooms through electronic mail. At that same time, a computer lab had been established for the purpose of remedial practice in math and reading skills, and this was extremely intimidating and foreign to me, a room best left for the more technically-minded teachers to manage. Since then, computer technology and I have come a long, long way.

> ***Computer technology is here, and it is now as integral to the classroom environment as books and chalk, or for early childhood, house centers and block centers.***

The computer has finally moved out of the lab and into the classroom. In 1997, Robert Gilstrap, a professor at George Mason University, reported in *Childhood Education* that more than 2.5 million computers were in use in the elementary and middle school classrooms in the United States, providing a ratio of one computer for every fourteen students (Gilstrap, 1997). Surely this ratio has dropped since Gilstrap reported this figure. As children become more fluent with computer technology, they begin to use it as a tool to approach and enhance learning situations, as Seymour Papert predicted in 1993 (Papert, 1993).

Computer technology is here, and it is now as integral to the classroom environment as books and chalk, or for early childhood, house centers and block centers. Children today are able to contact other children anywhere on the globe with the use of an up-to-date computer and the technology that accompanies it from their classrooms, they are able to see the individuals with whom they are communicating. Early care and education providers can help children by allowing them to dictate e-mail messages. Children can be taught to click on the icon to send the message. World events, weather, and sports can be immediately brought into classroom and studied as they occur, complete with pictures and sound, from the marvel we today call the Internet.

Software is being developed daily that literally brings history, science, math, reading, writing, social studies, art, music, and geography to life. In fact, there is so much software available on the educational market today that teachers must now be as discriminating in their selection of software as they are in their selection of books. Not all software is appropriate for all children in all classrooms. Most of us are still in the dawn of the exploration of the technological frontier, and the ability to make informed decisions regarding which software is appropriate and which software will provide optimal experiences for children using the computer can be overwhelming. Teachers must be able to obtain reliable and current information to make informed decisions in their software selections. The danger of blindly selecting software recommended by manufacturers without checking appropriateness is that 75% of technology that classrooms will receive will either be drill-and-skill or arcade-type software (Shade, 1996).

Teachers who are considering software to be used in their classrooms may wish to consider the following criteria:

1. Is the software age appropriate?
2. Does the software allow child control, facilitating active involvement rather than passive reaction?
3. Does the software provide clear instructions, using spoken or printed directions which are simple to follow and concise with graphics that help children to make their options clear?
4. Does the software offer expanding complexity, allowing children to build on their skills as they are ready to learn new ones?
5. Does the software provide independent exploration, where after initial exposure to it children should be able to manipulate the software without adult supervision?
6. Does the software orient the children to the *process* rather than to the product, allowing them to learn through discovery rather than through skill and drill?
7. Does the software offer real-world representation, being a simple and reliable model of some aspect of the real world?
8. Are the technical features of the software high quality? Is it colorful and does it include unclut-

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Technology in Early Childhood, continued

tered, realistic animated graphics? Are there realistic sound effects or music that correspond to objects on the screen? Does the software load from discs and run fast enough to maintain children's interest? Is the software able to withstand continual use by children in the classroom when given reasonable care?

9. Does the software allow for trial and error, providing children with opportunities to test alternative responses, and to engage in problem solving while building structures and knowledge?
10. Does the software offer visible transformations, enabling children to instantly view the effects of their actions on the software as they change objects and situations through their manipulation – does it provide children with the opportunity to view cause and effect relationships?

A good site that teachers may wish to explore for software evaluation is *SuperKids Educational Software Review* (http://www.superkids.com). Every month, parents, teachers and "kids" compare a selection of programs in various content areas, and are rated on a scale of one to five, with one = poor and 5 = great, in the categories of Educational Value, Kid Appeal, and Ease of Use. Additionally, this site describes the necessary system requirements for running the software and gives a description of what the software does. As an example, a recent review was given for *Blue's ABC Time Activities* (Humongous Entertainment), and SuperKids gave it a 4.0 for Educational Value, 4.4 for Kid Appeal, and 4.0 for Ease of Use. In its review, SuperKids wrote, concerning Educational Value, "*Blues ABC Time Activities* puts a heavy emphasis on the joys of reading. From the outset, Steve greets the user, book in hand, and he remains that way throughout the program. The clearly relayed message is that reading is fun, books are to be cherished, and learning to read is a delightful task awaiting the involved user."

Another software program that SuperKids reviewed *was JumpStart Preschool* (Knowledge Adventure), providing a rating of 4.5 for Kid Appeal, and 5.0 for Ease of Use. Obviously, early childhood teachers should take notice; this is something that they may well wish to have in their classrooms. The review states that *JumpStart Preschool*, "includes ten skill-based activities that focus on colors, shapes, letters, numbers quantities, counting, pre-reading, phonics and letter sounds, listening skills, sequencing, similarities and differences, and music. In addition to these skills, the animated magical kingdoms touch on season, animals, day and night, the calendar, and measurement." Talk about a fun way to develop skills! The "kid" reviewers loved it.

Another site that I explored because it sounded so intriguing was Microsoft's *TerraServer* (http://terraserver.microsoft.com). Students can log onto this site, fill in a city or region or lake, or the geographic coordinates of a specific location, and get a satellite image of that area displayed on their monitor, which they can then zoom in to within 100 yards. I must admit that as thrilled as I was about the possibilities for classroom use, my home computer is a relative technological dinosaur and the download speed was extremely slow. I found myself getting snacks and watching some television while the images were downloaded to my computer. However, this does not mean that a computer with a higher modem speed would not provide the thrill to students who wish to view the geographic areas or historical sites around the world. The instructional possibilities with this site are endless.

The role of computer technology in the classroom is no longer relegated to being simply a short-term, high-interest novelty, or a special center for children to go to and play games when other instructional activities have been completed. In 1997, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) mandated that future teachers enrolled in college and university teacher education programs complete a well-planned sequence of courses and/or experiences with educational technology, integrating the use of computers and other technologies into instruction, assessment, and professional productivity. I will be looking for other software and web sites to pass along to you in future issues. Until then, happy teaching!

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Techno Kids

A four-year-old girl was learning to say the Lord's Prayer. She was reciting it all by herself without help from her mother. She said, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us some e-mail. Amen."

The four year old preschool class was singing, "I've Been Working on the Railroad," with gusto. Loudly, above the other voices could be heard, "Fee Fi, see the video; Fee Fi see the videooooooo; Fee Fi, see the video; Strumming on the old banjo!"

A little girl was diligently pounding away on a computer. She told the teacher she was writing a story. "What's it about?" he asked. "I don't know," she replied. "I can't read."

Making "Moosic"

Keynote Speaker
Saturday, October 2, 1999
ECA of FL Conference

As adults we get into our car, drive a short distance, and a vast majority of us automatically turn on the radio or listen to a tape or CD. Without thinking we are attempting to enhance our mood by our choice of music. Sometimes we need soothing music; other times we want to sing along to a favorite old song. The classroom should be just like your experience in the car, where the music goes on automatically ... the exception being that *you have given thought* about what music you will listen to and the effect it will have on you and the children in your class. Finding the "right kind of music" that is appropriate for various classroom activities is a fun challenge.

Do you have a special time where all the children sit in a circle and sing? Now, here is some really exciting news. Music can and should be listened to more than at circle time or nap time. The research is conclusive; the data is in, Music – the "right kinds" of music – produces accelerated learning and enhanced cognitive development in our children. The American Psychological Association carried out a research project on relaxation and found that elementary school children learn better after being relaxed by listening to music. Relaxing music for first grade students enhanced performance on standardized tests. Various emotional states and thought processes are enhanced as well: from relaxation to concentration; creative play and improved coordination to quiet contemplation. Each is activated and accelerated simply by listening to various forms and styles of music.

"I would teach the children music, physics and philosophy ... but the most important is music, for in the patterns of the arts are the keys to all learning."

— Plato

So what is the "right kind" of music? You may have heard it said that there are only two kinds of music – good and bad. I had the opportunity to work with Les Paul, the inventor of the electric guitar and multi-track recording. Les said, "There are only two kinds of music: what you like, and what you don't like!" This may seem like the same statement, but the first is a judgment call; the other a personal response. As for me, as a parent and a teacher (and a songwriter), I say that both statements are correct when it

Anna Moo is a songwriter, recording artist and entertainer for children, is committed to educating children and adults through music and laughter. Majoring in Theater at the University of South Florida and Stanford University has led her to performances across the globe. Her recordings have won multiple awards, including "Best Musical Recording for Children" by Parent magazine.

Making "Moosic," continued

comes to sharing music with children. We should be sharing *good* music, and we should share what *we* like.

First: I feel very strongly that children need to hear **good** music. Good music stands the test of time. It is as viable today as it was twenty years ago or two hundred years ago. If the music includes lyrics, they should be universal in appeal. Children should be exposed to as many diverse styles of music as possible, from classical music to contemporary afro-pop. When we can learn at an early age that our diversities in culture, race, languages and music are to be celebrated and enjoyed, then our world becomes a better, richer place to live.

Second: Why expose children to songs that drive *you* nuts?! I often hear, "The children love that song ... but *if I hear it one more time! ...*" Find music that is acceptable to you and the children. Your attitude carries over in the classroom, so play what makes you feel good and what the children will enjoy as well. I also hear, "I am tired of the traditional songs like Old McDonald, The Wheels on the Bus, Bingo ... but the kids want to hear them over and over." My answer to that is: A) Are you sure it isn't time to retire?! Children learn by repetition and we all know this. B) Why not write some *new* lyrics? Spice up the old songs. Old McDonald can have a zoo instead of a farm ... Old McDonald had a zoo, E-I, E-I, EW! ... and in that zoo he had a kangaroo ... and so on. Have fun with the old, just make it new, the kids will enjoy it, and you will too! C) Get some new music. There are some great new songs on the market today. Read *School Library Journal*, *Parent Magazine* reviews, and *Parents Choice*, for guidance. There are plenty of artists delivering quality work these days.

On a personal note I want to add that the 'Mozart' effect is important, but does not necessarily make it as the "right kind of music" simply because it is Mozart! How a piece of music is played and arranged (the intention of the artist) is as important as the piece itself. We have all heard 'muzak' or elevator music of classical pieces of music. So the music can be *good*, but if you don't care for the performed version, it falls into the *'what you like or don't like' category.*

When I began "making moosic," that is, writing songs for my own children, I had no idea that it would blossom into a career. Yes, I had been a songwriter pitching my songs in New York, but this was a different pitch, to a different audience. I used to play nightclubs and smoky bars where my gig would start at 10:00 p.m. Now I play gigs that start at 10:00 a.m., with the smell of ... well, diapers and baby powder in the background! But I can't imagine doing anything I like better.

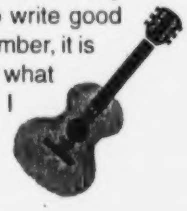
William Bennett, U.S. Secretary of Education, said, "No education is complete without an awareness of music. Music is an essential expression of the character of a society."

Plato said, "I would teach the children music, physics and philosophy ... but the most important is music, for in the patterns of the arts are the keys to all learning."

To think that there are cultures without reading or writing, *yet there is not a single culture on this planet without some form of music.* I would even go so far as to say there is not a living creature that does not express itself in some sort of musical format! Consider the buzzing bees, the howling of dogs, the meows of cats, the chattering whoops of monkeys. We may not consider this "music to our ears," but music is an expression of vibrational tones, so this is indeed music in its purest form.

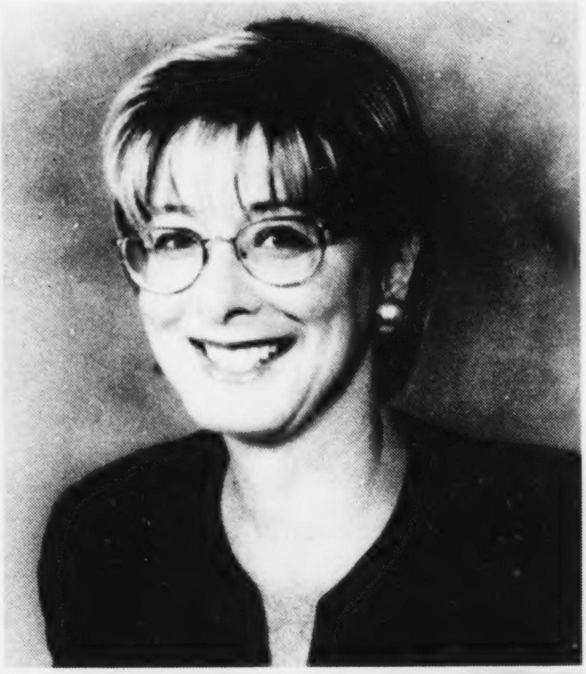
Children (and adults) learn best when they are having fun. Music can be that essential element that adds to making learning fun. On my first release, MAKING MOOSIC, a vast majority of the songs are about getting up in the morning. The song, *Tweet, Tweet*, talks about the sounds of the birds in the morning. *I Can Do it By Myself* talks about getting breakfast for yourself, pouring the big jug of milk by yourself. In ANNA MOO CRACKERS more than half of the songs are about Florida, and all of the songs are about animals. The songs show our relationship to animals and how they are an important part of who we are. WHEN I WAS A CHILD explores my own childhood memories, but my intention was to create a work that stimulated a dialogue for adults to talk to children about their own childhood experiences. Children *need* and want to hear your stories! It is how they connect with you, and how they learn to understand things that are going on inside themselves. It is so important to share our own stories of growing up with our children. When they hear about the time you wanted to run away from home, or what happened to you when you tried to ride your bike without training wheels ... Whew! ... Now that's some good stories ya'll! My fourth release, MOOEY CHRISTMAS, is just that ... songs for the holidays. My new release this year is HOLY COW! ... holy songs for children. It is a multicultural celebration of friendship, God and Spirit. Songs are in English and Greek, Spanish, Chinese, Hebrew and Swahili. It is nondenominational, and the main idea of this album is that we are *ALL* children of a loving God! It was a blessing to write, and is a blessing to perform.

My challenge for you is to find the right kind of music to use in the classroom. Make sure it is good, fun, and educational at the same time. Use it not just at circle time or nap time, but throughout the day. I have attempted to write good music ... but remember, it is a matter of using what you like as well. I can only hope you will like my style of "moosic!"



Touching the Future

Keynote Speaker
Friday, October 1, 1999
ECA of FL Conference



It is so easy to stay in the present when we work with young children. They keep us there with their antics, needs, misbehavior and cuteness. Quite frankly, there is enough to do in the "here and now." However, it is important for us to pause every now and again and reconsider what working with young children is really about - the future. On a daily basis, we quite literally touch their futures.

It does not matter what you label your job: caregiver, early childhood educator, educarer, or preschool teacher, each of you who works with children is a *teacher.* Whether we recognize it or not, we teach skills, principles, and life lessons which alter the futures of every child in our care. Let's look at some of the truly important ways we touch their futures.

Madelyn Swift, M.Ed., is a nationally acclaimed author, speaker, and authority on discipline, family dynamics, and personal communication. Madelyn is President of Childright, an educational consulting firm which provides training to educators, administrators, parents, and corporations. She is the author of Discipline for Life: Getting it Right with Children and is currently completing her third book. Madelyn completed her Master of Education degree at Bowling Green State University and her certification as a school psychologist from the State of Ohio.

> ***Know what principles you are teaching. For they will return to help or haunt. We will indeed reap what we have sown.***

1 DISCIPLINE: DISCOVERING THE LAW OF THE HARVEST

Perhaps the most frequent way we touch the future is with our discipline. Discipline - before we can do it, we will need to know what it is. Most of us have been taught that discipline is only about changing or improving our children's behavior which would allow us to be concerned only about the present. This view of discipline is shortsighted and deals only with current behavior. It allows the same misbehavior to reoccur and reoccur. It misses the less obvious, but critical long-term effects of discipline.

What we overlook is that the root word for discipline means to teach. We must recognize that not only does our discipline affect current behavior, it also affects future behavior. Good discipline not only teaches life skills, such as problem solving, anger management, chores, and respectful language, it also teaches life lessons and guiding life principles. Principles that our children will use to make decisions with and choose their behavior for the rest of their lives.

Every disciplinary action is grounded in a principle which, whether we are aware of it or not, will be taught and then used by our children. We must learn to use true discipline techniques which effectively alter behavior *and* teach principles which return to help rather than haunt as our children age into adolescence and adulthood. The goal for all of discipline is to lead to self-discipline.

What is an example of what to do that both effectively improves behavior and teaches helpful life principles and touches their futures in helpful ways? And further, what allows us to maintain our own integrity by practicing principles, like the Golden Rule, respect and honesty, in which we strongly believe?

Guide to Remedy and/or Amends

Are you aware of the fact that how you handle a two-year-old's spilled juice will help determine how much gas is in their parent's car when she turns legal driving age? When a toddler spills juice, we first of all, need *not* to take this behavior personally. Their behavior is more often about inanimate objects talking to them (the cup said, "Drop me!") than about us. Not getting angry at misbehavior helps us to handle ourselves much better and more respectfully. Remedy and Amends is a strategy that works!

Since a young toddler is unable to fully clean up a spill, we send her to get a cloth or sponge, to contribute to cleaning up at her level. The lesson this child needs to learn is that when you make a mess, break things, or undo things, your job is to put it back the way it was.

Two important things to remember about lessons: 1) a child will continue giving you opportunities to teach a particular lesson until he learns it, and 2) he will learn the lesson - but at his own speed.

By three years of age, teach a child to wet the cloth and then wring it out to clean up. By four years of age, to wipe all around and by five, to do the clean-up twice. Yes, the child has learned how to clean up a liquid mess, but more importantly he has learned that when you make a mess, it is your responsibility to clean it up. We can never know how many lessons any one child will require, we only know that if we teach this lesson of remedy and amends, any child will eventually learn the concept. Once learned, a child will go to his friend's house, play with a toy and unfortunately break it. *Without any intervention from a grown-up*, this child will go to his piggy bank and get money to give to his friend to replace the broken item.

The moment they earn their driver's license, our children will ask to use our car. They will notice as they return the car that they have used up most of the gas. Many teens simply think, "Phew, I made it home. Not my problem." But a teen who has been taught Remedy and Amends takes the car to the gas station and puts a couple of dollars worth of gas into it. The next morning when his parent gets into the car, there is a quarter tank of fuel. No problem. No need for discipline. Actually, that is not quite true. Discipline most certainly did take place - the afternoon before. It's called self-discipline, and we began teaching it when this child was two years old and spilled juice. Not a bad investment in their future!

When a child is mean to another, shoves him, or says ugly things, Remedy and Amends can be used. Have the children play together. The offender makes amends by playing what the other child wants to play. When you make someone feel bad, your job is to help him feel better. Getting along, playing nicely will do this.

Not only must we put in time with our children, we must put it in wisely. **Know what principles you are teaching. For they will return to help or haunt. We will indeed reap what we have sown.**

2 CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Mary Pipher defines character as "that within a person which governs moral choices ... it is teaching the young to make wise and kind choices." So how do we teach and build character? We will need children to become adults of character and conscience.

Accountability and Character

Teach the link between accountability and true self-regard: Act Right, Feel Right; Act Wrong, Feel Wrong. There is a trend in this nation where parents understand that they want their child to be taught responsibility. But parents do not want this child held accountable for anything which might make him feel bad for fear this will harm self-esteem. This is truly misguided. First, responsibility comes from accountability – owning *all* of our behavior and its outcomes. Second, true self-regard comes from consistently making right choices.

Age-old it is and still true: we must teach our children that if you act wrong, you will feel wrong about yourself. If you act right you will feel right. "Self-regard is a by-product of a life lived wisely."[1] Too often parents worry more about their children's self-esteem than their behavior and overlook that self-esteem is a direct result of behavioral choices.

3 "AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION"

Teach job descriptions as class members.

1. It is your job to *Get Along*. You may disagree but do it agreeably.
   ⇨ Be respectful.

•You will have to model getting along skills and teach problem-solving skills, anger management and respectful language. You cannot just expect your children to know how to do these.

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[1] Pipher, M. *The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding Our Families*. NY: GP Putnam's Sons, 1996.

Touching the Future, continued

2. It is your job to *Maintain or Increase how another feels about himself.*
   ➪ Be nice.

3. It is your job to *Contribute to the maintenance and progress of the group.*
   ➪ Be helpful.

4 TEACH PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

The single most important skill we will teach the upcoming generation is problem solving. We will not solve all of the problems facing the nation today. This next generation will need extraordinary skills. This means they will require much help in learning to solve problems and lots of practice. What better gift to give them than exceptional problem-solving skills.

In many cases, the most effective way to teach problem-solving skills takes place during times of crisis and conflict. Come to grips with the fact that conflict in your classroom is your friend. It alone offers the best opportunity to teach and practice problem solving. Use times of conflict in your classroom to teach four important aspects of problem-solving:

1. Look after everyone's interest, even those absent.
   ➪ Be nice.
2. Deal fairly: no lion's share or special interests.
   ➪ Be fair.
3. Deal straight: no hidden agendas or deals.
   ➪ Be honest.
4. Attack the problem not the person.
   ➪ Be smart.

Touching the future is never hard; we do all of the time whether we are aware of it or not. Touching the future in helpful, emotionally healthy ways takes considerable more skill and forethought. And yet, if we do not take the pains to change, how can we expect the children to change? And how much effort is a better future, a better world worth?

Did You Know ?

Did You Know is a new column in *Children Our Concern* (COC). It is the goal of the column to make you more aware of topics on health and safety in an early childhood program. Included in the column will be a quick and easy healthy snack for you to try with your children. I look forward to writing this column for COC. If you have any questions, I can be contacted through e-mail at Susan_Jamrog@ccps.k12.fl.us or at Charlotte Vo-Tech, 1-941-255-7500.

HEALTHY SNACKS FOR CHILDREN

Adults generally snack between meals as a treat. Adult snacks are usually above and beyond daily nutrition needs. **Did you know** that snacks are part of the daily food plan of children? Children eat small amounts of food at meals which do not meet their daily nutritional requirements. Snacks between meals are the way children meet their bodies' needs. Because snacks are a part of their daily nutritional plan, they should be made of healthy foods.

Many children enter early care and education programs within one year of birth. Most children will remain there until they enter school and often attend throughout their elementary years. We influence nutritional patterns that often become habits for life. If a program serves salty fried chips snacks, cookies, and fruity sugar-water based drinks, children are only being filled up with non-nutritional calories. Serving non-nutritious foods year after year creates patterns that become life-long habits. Serving healthy foods will help promote lifelong nutritious habits.

Suzi Jamrog

✂ **Cut and paste onto an index card.**

CRACKER PIZZAS

Round crackers
Spaghetti or pizza sauce
Shredded cheese

Put out round crackers, sauce and cheese. Allow children to build their own pizzas. They do not need to be cooked. For even more fun, allow children to grate their own cheese.

Keynote Speaker
Friday, October 1, 1999
ECA of FL Conference

On Becoming a Parenting Expert

It is often said that the quickest way to become a "parenting expert" is to become a parent. Unfortunately, that is, in fact, the way most of us gain our knowledge. We follow our instincts, learn from friends, get advice from our mother-in-law, and pray that we will do right by our kids! The good news is that, over the past fifteen years, there has been a growing emphasis on parenting and early childhood education. Happily for parents, caregivers and early childhood educators, there are more and more organizations like The Early Childhood Association of Florida.

I became interested in early childhood development a few years before I had my own children (I am the proud – and exhausted – mother of twin five-year-old boys). At that time, I was still at a high point in my show business career. I was co-starring as the "sultry songstress," Afton Cooper, on the hit TV series, "Dallas." I had hit records all over Europe, and I had recently completed the film "A Chorus Line: The Movie." Then my sister, Judy, had a precious little baby girl named Lindsey. Often, Lindsey and I would cuddle together and watch the early morning line-up of preschool television shows. The snuggling was wonderful, but the content of many of the shows left much to be desired.

My sister and I talked about the sad state of television. We agreed that television had the potential of being a tremendous teaching tool. Since it was inevitable that so many children would be watching TV, wouldn't it be great if there was a show that would be entertaining and educational for kids, and palatable, if not enjoyable, to adults!?

Thus began our swift ascent into the world of children's television and the creation and production of "The Huggabug Club," seen nationally on public television stations. We researched a plethora of topics related to children, including the effects of color, rhythm and music on children's ability to assimilate knowledge. We put together a team of accredited childhood development and parenting experts, such as pediatricians, child psychologists and nutritionists to serve on our advisory board. Judy and I drew on our talents as songwriters and scriptwriters. Then, to make the entire concept a reality, we secured a highly experienced and very talented producer with whom we had partnered with over the years – one whom we knew would put in all of her heart and soul -- and, ultimately, her pocketbook, too – our mother, Ruth Landers.

Now, six years later, after having won The Parents' Choice Award, The Dove Foundation Award, The Kids First! Award, given by The Coalition For Quality Children's Media, The Media Access Award (for our episode that deals with a physically challenged young boy) and our association with The National Parents Day Coalition in association with the U.S. Department of Education, I am a "parenting expert." By the way, do any of you have any ideas on how I can get my boys to eat their vegetables? I'm open to all suggestions!

Audrey Landers is an actress, singer, writer, and creator of the award winning PBS's Huggabug Club.

DINOSAURS

We were dismantling a plastic milk container igloo when a child in my MultiLevel (Kindergarten - First Grade) class remarked that a string of the containers looked like a dinosaur's backbone. Almost immediately an excited discussion was taking place in the classroom. "I know all about T-Rex." "Did you know that some of the dinosaurs were as small as chickens?" "I saw a dinosaur bone in a museum." Our next theme had been determined. The children eagerly agreed upon dinosaurs as our next topic.

On Monday morning, the children came to school laden with dinosaur books, pictures and toys. From a class discussion it was learned that many of the children had seen dinosaur exhibits in a museum or science center. "How would you like to turn our classroom into a dinosaur museum?" I asked. "We could sell tickets," suggested one child. "Let's invite the other classes to visit," said another. "We could show bones," added another child. The dinosaur museum had begun!

After sharing the book, Dinosaur Museum by Gail Gibbons, we began listing the things that some of the children recalled from the book or had seen in a museum. From the list, we decided which exhibits we would create. The children chose dinosaur bones, fossils, and dinosaur eggs. Other exhibits progressed during the following weeks.

Children quickly began gathering dinosaur facts and compiling them into books. Labeled drawings and paintings began popping up all over our classroom. Pet dinosaurs, caves, and dinosaur traps were appearing daily in our block center.

Plastic dinosaurs were weighed on a balance scale with Unifix cubes in our math center. The weights were then charted and compared. Actual dinosaur lengths were found in reference books. The lengths were then measured on the floor and recorded, using strips of masking tape marked with the measurement and a picture of the dinosaur. Dinosaur fruit snacks were sorted and graphed by color and plastic dinosaur heights were measured with blocks. A large T-Rex footprint was taped to the floor and we counted how many of our feet it would take to fill it.

We were fortunate to have a class visitor show us a slide presentation of actual dinosaur digs and real fossils. He also shared a plastic cast of an actual T-Rex footprint and tooth. After his visit, the children made plaster fossils using ferns, seashells, and dinosaur footprints from sponges. Each fossil was then labeled for display.

We then discussed what paleontologists could have learned about dinosaurs by studying their footprints. Each child then used a footprint shaped sponge to paint a picture and write what he/she would have learned from such a find. For example: Was the dinosaur big or small? Did it walk on all fours? Did it travel in a herd?

After looking at many pictures of museums, the children decided that our museum needed a skeleton. Luckily, some of the plastic milk containers were still on hand. The children laid various sized containers on the floor and decided which bone each container would represent. Holes were then punched in the containers and wire was used to string them together. The children used large pieces of Styrofoam to form the head while smaller pieces and toothpicks became ribs, teeth, and claws. When completed, the skeleton stood seven feet tall and eight feet long, from head to tip of tail.

The ticket takers welcome visitors to the museum.

Now the interest really peaked. The children wanted a lifelike Stegosaurus. Boxes of all shapes and sizes were gathered, painted, and taped together to form the Stegosaurus. A tail and head were cut from paper, stapled, and stuffed with newspaper. Bony plates were made from cardboard. Alongside the Stegosaurus model we displayed a chart of facts that the children had gathered and written about the dinosaur.

By Marybeth Matta, Instructional Specialist, Multi-level Class, Creative School for Children, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

Dinosaurs, continued

We shared the book Little Grunt and the Big Egg by Tomie dePaola. This led to the creation of our papier mâché dinosaur eggs. Over several days the children covered large balloons with papier mâché. When dried, the eggs were painted with various colors and patterns. Each child then wrote about the baby that was inside the egg.

During this entire time, parents had been saving, cleaning and bleaching chicken bones in preparation for our dig. I had been fortunate that in the past a donation of antlers, small animal skulls, and turtle shells had been made to my classroom. We had previously discussed fossil digs and the care and handling of precious finds. Armed with plastic shovels, we began our dig. Imagine the excitement when the bones began to be unearthed! Each child placed his/her finds in an aluminum pie tin to later be examined. When all the treasures had been found, children used paintbrushes and water to carefully clean the fossils. Each child then labeled the fossils with the dinosaur name and body part. The results were amazing. We had found tail bones, ribs, teeth, bony plates, and many other parts. Their imaginations were stirred! It was now time to begin the museum setup. We looked at brochures from other museums to help us decide how we would do it. The children decided that we needed a brochure complete with map, operating hours, and exhibit descriptions. Each child then picked the area where he/she wanted to work. Each group was then responsible for an exhibit sign and description to appear in the brochure.

Advertisements regarding our museum were made and placed throughout the school. Tickets were made using a dinosaur stamp, then counted and distributed to the other classes.

The Dig - The Find

Constructing the Stegosaurus

Each worker made a vest from white paper and wore a name tag, so guests could easily identify them.

Opening day finally arrived! Parents, teachers, students, and many other visitors toured our museum throughout the morning hours. My students eagerly answered questions and offered information to our guests. What an incredible experience for both the MultiLevel children and the visitors!

It was amazing to see how each child in the class was so completely involved in every aspect of our dinosaur theme. Parents commented that the children were requesting dinosaur books and were practicing dinosaur facts at home, so they could answer questions from museum visitors.

The following day we enjoyed a well-deserved treat. I painted a whole watermelon with white tempera and added some purple spots, then hid it outside. The children were very surprised when they found this delicious edible dinosaur egg!

Evaluation during this time was through observation of children working on cooperative projects, discussions of dinosaurs and progress of projects, and recorded work, such as creative writing and fact gathering.

What was our next theme? Well, I heard one child comment, "Those dinosaur eggs look like something from outer space."

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Join the Publishing Support Network

Teachers of young children in a variety of settings often utilize wonderful creative methods of instruction with their children, but only a few, fortunate colleagues ever get to share in the experience. Sometimes teachers work wonders with difficult children or parents by using a new approach to managing conflict. Again, this innovation can be lost at the school level.

When asked why they don't write about their work, teachers often respond that they don't know how to write an article, or are afraid that their writing will not be professional enough to got published. More often, the reasons these teachers don't write is lack of time, or lack of support in their efforts. Thus, teaching ideas that really work in the classroom, that should be widely distributed for other teachers to read about, are never communicated effectively beyond the school walls. There may be a simple solution to this dilemma!

The Publication Committee for *Children Our Concern* invites interested university and college faculty and classroom teachers to join together to form a **Publishing Support Network**. Teachers and professors cross paths many times during the school year. Sometimes, professors supervise interns in public school classrooms, or other settings with young children. Other times teachers and professors come together in graduate level classes in university, in college courses designed for teachers of young children, or in meetings of local affiliates of ECA of FL.

A university professor could identify a teacher, or group of teachers, who are doing wonderful things, but don't ever write about them. Teachers may know an assistant professor who is interested in their work, and with whom they have a good rapport. In a collaborative effort, the professor and teachers could produce an article and submit it to *Children Our Concern* or other early childhood journals for publication. In this manner, great ideas and innovative practice can be communicated to teachers, student teachers, and other professionals who work with young children and their families, through our journal. This will also help university professors who live by the motto "publish or perish!"

If you are interested in this idea, and would like to help organize **the Publishing Support Network**, here are some tips for getting started.

Teachers, post this column on your school bulletin boards, and share it with your colleagues. Show it to university professors or college faculty who visit your school, or whom you meet in other settings.

Professors and college faculty, show this column to your colleagues, and to teachers in the schools where your interns are placed. Start the dialog, work out ways to collaborate on writing, and send your products to *Children Our Concern*!

For more information, or just to discuss this idea, contact:

Dr. Elaine Clifford, Publications Committee Chair
Children Our Concern
3535 Todd Lane / Mims, FL 32754
E-mail: ecliffor@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu

Help Wanted!

ECA of FL is recruiting manuscript reviewers for *Children Our Concern. Children Our Concern* is a peer-reviewed journal. We want to be sure that all submitted manuscripts are reviewed quickly and by experts on the topic, so that the journal continues to be regarded as an excellent resource for teachers, students, advocates, and adult educators. If you are interested in occasionally reading and evaluating a manuscript, contact the ECA of FL.

Call for Manuscripts

ECA of FL Publications Committee is seeking manuscripts for *Children Our Concern* addressing issues of concern to educators in Florida as well as national and international perspectives on early childhood education. See back cover of this journal for guidelines.

Photos and Art Needed

COC will use children's art and photos of children and teachers in classroom settings to illustrate articles. Please submit with a permission slip for all pictured. Photos/art will not be returned.

Snack-Time Math

Children are setting the table for snack. Shekira is putting the laminated placemats on the table using the number of chairs at the table as a guide – one mat for each chair. Allen comes behind her with the paper cups, and is placing them carefully, one on each mat. Nathan is in the art center, counting the number of wipe-off markers he needs and has taken six from the box. He places one beside each mat. Juan has the stack of napkins and carefully folds each in half before placing one at each place setting. Marsha carries a pitcher of juice and places it at one end of the table. She then returns to the kitchen to retrieve a second, smaller jug and sets it down at the opposite end of the table. Alex is responsible for placing a large plate containing some goldfish crackers in the center of the table. The children find a chair and sit down at the table where their teacher, Keith, joins them.

"Let's all take one fish to eat now. Before we take any more, let's guess how many goldfish are left on the large plate," Keith says. "I'll make a chart of your guesses, and then we will count to see who was closest." Keith has a prepared chart with each child's name on it, and quickly records each child's guess. Using plastic gloves, Keith quickly counts, with the children counting along, the number of crackers. Keith has used a large plate, so that as he counts he can push the fish from one end of the plate to the other. Once the actual number has been discovered, he refers to the chart, and the children find out who came closest to the correct number. Keith has carefully chosen the number of fish crackers to coincide with the general counting ability of the children in the group. Then, Keith counts out loud, with the children in chorus, as he gives each child some fish crackers.

Keith has skillfully set up his snack-time as an opportunity for children to learn about mathematical concepts and language in an informal setting. Of course, Keith keeps in mind that this is snack-time, not a math lesson, but he deliberately uses math words as he converses with the children. Keith understands that children construct, recreate or reinvent mathematics as they interact with concrete materials, math symbols, and story problems. Constructivism is a theory that views the child as creating knowledge by acting on experience gained from the world and then finding meaning in it (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987). Mathematical experiences in meaningful, everyday activities allow children to internalize concepts, and become confident in their mathematical ability.

Keith may intertwine a few other math concepts into the snack time, e.g., "I am going to give each of you six goldfish. Let's count them together! Let's use our wipe-off markers and we will draw a circle on our math mat for each fish we have. Look, I will do mine too. I have eaten one goldfish. I think I'll cross him off my mat. I wonder how many I have left? Alex, you have eaten some of your fish. Cross them off on your mat. How many do you have left? If I give you one more fish, how many will you have? I am going to put one fish in each corner of my mat! How many corners does your mat have? What shape is it? How many sides? Do you see anything else with four sides? Which pitcher is larger? Which is smaller? Look at Shekira's cup. Does she have more or less juice than you have in your cup? What shape is your napkin? What shape is it when you fold it in half?"

Mathematics is dynamic; it is something one does. Communication plays an important role in helping children construct links between their informal, intuitive notions, and the abstract language and symbolism of mathematics. It is important that young children learn to "talk" mathematics while interacting with classmates (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1990).

A wide variety of words comprise a good math vocabulary. Many teachers plan excellent math activities in their learning centers, but fail to see the opportunities to teach mathematical language and concepts through everyday routines, such as meal times. Often, teachers use mathematical words in a variety of situations which they see as unrelated to math. They don't realize that everyday words such as "over" and "under" are a part of the math curriculum. Teachers are often surprised to learn about these words. It can be helpful for teachers to see the connection between conversational math and the math curriculum (Wishon, Crabtree, & Jones, 1998).

Teachers must be aware that children cannot teach themselves math without guidance and support. When our expectations are high, children will reach the goal where everyone enjoys math and can use it as a language and a tool for future success.

By Elaine F. Clifford, Early Childhood Graduate Studies, The University of Central Florida, Daytona Beach, Florida

The following are good math words that can be used in conversation at snack-time, or at any other time during children's play.

COMPARING WORDS

big	little
large	small
heavy	light
empty	full
hot	cold
near	far
tall	short
fast	slow

QUANTITY WORDS

more
less
the same
fewer
greater than
less than
many

SHAPE WORDS

sides
round
circle
corners
edges
points
round
square
triangle
cube

POSITIONAL WORDS

top
inside
behind
left
middle
outside
in front of
right
bottom
beside

DIRECTIONAL WORDS

(Directional words involve movement.)
forward
backward
up
down
toward
away from
to the right
to the left
around

SEQUENCE WORDS

first
last
beginning
end
before
after
in front of
in back of
ahead of
middle
behind
next to

NUMBER WORDS

◆ A very important group of words describe our number system. As a teacher, it is helpful to know the difference between the following names for numbers:

- **COUNTING NUMBERS**
  These numbers start with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 . . . . .
- **WHOLE NUMBERS**
  These numbers include zero.
  Example: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 . . . . .
- **CARDINAL NUMBERS**
  This number names the total in a set. We match the items in a set to the counting numbers (set of four fish). The cardinal number is 4.
- **ORDINAL NUMBERS**
  These names give each a position such as first, second, third, fourth, fifth . . .
  Ordinal numbers are very difficult for children. It may take them until the age of eight to use the words correctly.

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THE BOOK NOOK

Children's Literature in Review

LOVE YOU FOREVER

By Robert Much; Sheila McGraw, Illustrator; ages: all.

A delightful story of unconditional love between parent and child. It begins with a young mother rocking her infant son and singing:

> "I'll love you forever,
> I'll like you forever,
> As long as I'm living
> My baby you'll be."

The son grows up and brings frustration to his mother at every stage, but she never stops rocking him and reaffirming her love with her little verse. The son becomes a man and moves away to make his own home. Mother continues to find ways to get into her grown son's home and to continue to rock him while he is asleep, and to sing her little verse.

The children laugh at the illustration showing a grown man being rocked. This adds humor to the story. When his mother grows old and sick, the son goes to her and rocks her, and sings the little verse to her, substituting the last line for "my mommy you'll be." The son goes home to rock and sing to his newborn daughter.

The story shows how love and caring are passed down through the family for generations. Children like the humor and the security that family love provides. Children ask for this story over and over again.

• • • • •

CHICKA CHICKA BOOM BOOM

By Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault; Lois Ehlert, Illustrator; ages: 3 – 6

Children learn the sequence of the alphabet through repetition and by rote. This is a book that teaches the alphabet sequence with rhythm and beat. The alphabet, a few letters at a time, climb up a coconut tree. All goes well until XYZ make their journey up the tree and all letters fall in a heap. The letters call for help, and one by one, with little injuries, find their way out of the pile. Nonsense phrases, such as "Skit, skat, skoodle doot" and "Flip, flop, flee" catch the children's "funny bones." If you are good at it, you can read this verse in a rap rhythm.

I HAVE A SISTER – MY SISTER IS DEAF

By Jeanne Whitehouse Peterson; Deborah Kogan Ray, Illustrator; ages: 4 – 8.

The story is told by a big sister of a deaf girl. She tells of all the things her deaf sister can do, such as, running, jumping, and climbing, which is very much like the things done by all children. She tells of the sounds her sister cannot hear but can feel with her hands and how she can even talk with her hands. It is through vibrations of sound that help little sister know about sound. She helps to clarify for children that being deaf does not physically hurt. The big sister is proud of her little sister and tells what it is like to go through daily life with her. She even plugs her own ears to try to understand what it is like not to hear, an exercise you could try with the children in your class.

This book points out the fact that all children are alike but some just "work" differently than others. It shows that children can succeed and are loved in spite of their differences.

The illustrations are done in pencil and charcoal giving an impression of the shadowy existence between the world of sound and the world of silence.

• • • • •

WHO SAYS A DOG GOES BOW-WOW?

By Hank De Zutter; Suse MacDonald, Illustrator; ages: 4 – 8.

This is an introduction to worldwide languages. Who ever thought of a dog making any other sound than bow-wow? The English speaking children recognize the bow-wow sound, but how do other children from other countries hear their dogs bark? In Hebrew, bow-wow is huf-huf and in Italian, it's bow-bow, and in Chinese, it's wang-wang. This provides an introduction to sounds a variety of animals make in different languages. It assists children in developing a concept of diverse cultures and in making comparisons of how some sounds are similar and others very different in a variety of languages. The book is beautifully illustrated in the collage-paper cut style of Eric Carle.

by Dolores Burghard, Director Creative School for Children, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

Affiliate Treasure Chest

DEAR READER,

We hope that you can make good use of these ideas. Since we are reinstating the "Affiliate Treasure Chest" column, each affiliate is invited to send along any ideas that you have used in your affiliate and found beneficial. You need not wait for a special letter, but can send them at any time to:

Mrs. Betty D. Butler
4140 NE 5th Terrace
Ocala, FL 34479-2350.

(I can't wait to try the "edible aquarium" with my granddaughters!)

BIG SUN AYC CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

During the Week of the Young Child, we have been sponsoring an annual Children's Festival. We contact child care centers to sponsor an activity: local businesses to sponsor a table, the Sheriff's office to send out a car and an officer, the fire department to bring a fire truck, and some local groups who entertain. The activities are all free. We do sell pizza and soft drinks, and, this year we are going to try coffee and donut holes for the parents who want something earlier in the morning. The activities include a Bean Bag Toss, fingerpainting, playdough, digging for buried "treasure," paper bag puppets, a clown and balloons, and many other fun activities for young children. We also dispense information about our affiliate, CDS programs that are available, fingerprinting for children, health services and any other opportunities that parents can take advantage of for their child's welfare and happiness. We rent the City Auditorium and the Festival lasts from 9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. This has proved to be a popular day and the children look forward to it.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA AEYC BOOKLETS FOR WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

During their Week of the Young Child celebration, North Central Florida AEYC makes and distributes clever little booklets compiled and printed by the members of the affiliate. Last year over 2000 were distributed to the parents in the community. One is titled "Simple Solutions" and the other, "Have Fun with Your Family – Cool Ideas for a Hot Summer."

Here are two great ideas from "Simple Solutions:"

MOMMY'S KISSES

Give your young children a "kiss from mommy" to last them through their day. Kiss a lipstick print on the back of each of your child's hands. The child feels he/she has a part of their mother that will stay with them.

Cut up small squares of white fabric and press a lipstick "kiss" on each square. Tuck a "kiss" into your child's pocket when you have to leave him/her.

Teach your child his/her right hand by giving a "kiss" on the right hand only.

A TRIMMING TRADITION

Here is a holiday tradition that makes trimming and un-trimming the tree lots of fun. Store each special ornament in a sandwich bag along with a slip of paper identifying its history. For example, "Pine cone Santa made by Sam in first grade," or "Red and green felt tree given to Sarah by Aunt Jean – 1994." The notes help recall the details that make each ornament special. After the holidays, each person picks an empty bag, reads the tag, then searches the tree to find that ornament. Each year your collection of ornaments and memories will grow. This idea can also be used to celebrate birthdays and other important holidays.

Here are two more terrific ideas from "Have Fun with Your Family:"

SIDEWALK PAINTING

Give your child an empty squeeze bottle (like an empty ketchup or mustard bottle) filled with water and show them how they can "write" or "draw" pictures on the sidewalk squeezing out a stream of water.

EDIBLE AQUARIUM

Make an edible aquarium. Make blueberry Jello™ and pour into clear glasses or clear small dishes. Put the Jello™ into the refrigerator until slightly jelled and firm. Stir in gummy fish very gently. Put back in the refrigerator until completely firm. If you wish you may add some whipped topping for sea foam and then eat the fishy aquarium.

Amy Cordray carries the Florida flag at the opening of the SECA Conference in Nashville, TN.

Beverly Oglesby, SECA Representative, presents a plaque to outgoing SECA President, Suzanne Gellens.

Above: Floridians enjoyed the reception in honor of Ann Levy at the SECA conference.

Amy Cordray and Janet Allyn share experiences with ECA of FL Past President Alma David (1959) at the SECA Conference.

ECA of Florida salutes three award winners!

1999 Teacher of the Year

Sister Roberta Bailey (East Pasco AEYC) "1999 Teacher of the Year in Pasco County" - *Sister Roberta is currently the Financial Officer for ECA of FL and was the editor of* Children our Concern.

1999 SECA Outstanding Member

*Above**: Ann Levy (Leon AEYC)* "1999 SECA Outstanding Member" - *Ann was President of ECA of FL in 1982 and is a Past President of SECA. She was the recipient of the Barbara H. Finck Award in 1995.* *Above left**: ECA of FL Board hosted a reception in Ann Levy's honor at the SECA Conference. Left to right: Suzanne Gellens, Executive Director, Ann Levy, ECA of FL & SECA Past President, Janice Sean, Vice President, and Beverly Oglesby, SECA Representative greeted attendees.*

Winner 1998 Barbara H. Finck Award

*Left**: Gail Robertson (Pinellas ECA)* "1998 ECA of FL Barbara H. Finck Award winner" - *Gail was President of ECA of FL in 1995.* *Far left**: ECA of FL Past President Janet Allyn presents the 1998 Barbara H. Finck Award to Gail Robertson.*

KNOW A MEMBER WHO ...

- Has never attended an ECA of FL annual conference?
- Is actively participating in your local affiliate?
- Would be enriched by the experience of attending a State conference for Early Childhood Professionals?

Your affiliate may nominate this member for an ECA of FL conference scholarship. The winner receives complimentary registration; conference sponsored luncheon, banquet, and member luncheon tickets; and $250 for travel and other expenses.

Call the ECA of FL office for applications (941-951-0606)

Applications must be postmarked by August 15, 1999.

Our Science Fair Adventure

By Cynthia Poudrette and Mimi Hecker
Rainbow's End Play and Learn Center, Port Charlotte, Florida

Our science fair adventure all started with the arrival of the first flyer for the Early Childhood Association of Florida's 1998 Conference. We opened up the flyer and there it was – the information on the science fair. We looked at each other and immediately said; "We have to do it!"

Our Pre-K classroom is filled with science. What a way to share our love with others. We knew exactly what activity we'd use for the fair. We chose the spider habitat, which is always a hit with our class. We read books and discuss spiders, we make spider webs in the classroom and then we have our spider hunt. We gather our bug catchers and nets then set out in search of eight-legged creatures. The children point and scream as spiders are found in cracks and crevices and trees. The spiders are relocated to their new habitat in our classroom. Our learning adventure continues with graphing which spiders make webs and which spiders don't. The kids enjoy watching the spiders and checking for casualties. We thought our classroom experiment would be the best part; little did we know our true adventure started in Orlando because of "Willie", our spider.

When we arrived at the hotel we checked into our rooms then immediately went to set up Willie's habitat. As the final touches were put on our display we finally settled into our "habitat." Being the nervous mothers we are, we checked on Willie several times. All seemed well; we were off to dinner. Our hunger satisfied, we needed one last Willie check before bed. When we arrived at our display all was gone except "the note." The note read, "Please contact the front desk – your display has been moved." All we could think of was, "Where is Willie?"

We ran to our room and called the front desk. We frantically explained our predicament to the confused man at the front desk who had no idea what we were talking about. He finally did a search and located Willie safe in his peanut butter jar. We begged him to make sure Willie would not be freed or otherwise disposed of. He assured us Willie would be fine and we could get him in the morning. We later discovered a fellow guest of the hotel had a terrible fear of spiders, so relocation of the science fair was needed. When we retrieved Willie the next day, attached to his jar was another note. This note said, "This is Willie the spider. Please do not free Willie or otherwise dispose of him. The guests in room 725 will come pick him up." We were thrilled to have Willie and repeatedly thanked the kind man for Willie's return.

While putting Willie back in his habitat we relayed this story to several volunteers who were helping with the science fair which led to several "Willie Watchers." Throughout the day we'd check on Willie and receive spider updates. On the few occasions we saw our kind man from the front desk he always inquired as to Willie's well being. We finished our day and anxiously awaited the results of the science fair.

Saturday morning at the group get together they announced the results. We did it! We won first place. We graciously accepted our prize.

Later we realized the true prize was all the fun we had and the people who all became involved with our project and our Willie. When we finally went to free Willie he was already gone. A Willie Watcher thinks he crawled on someone who got a little too close. If you found a friendly spider on your shoulder at the conference don't despair, it was just our Willie catching a ride, starting his own adventure.

Thank you Early Childhood Association of Florida for our experience. Make your own adventure; join the science fair.

• • • LOOK INSIDE CONFERENCE PULLOUT FOR APPLICATION FORM • • •

Do you have a clever classroom idea?

Win a children's book if your idea is published.

Send ideas to
ECA of FL Business Office,
3049 Browning St.
Sarasota, FL 34237

Hugs

By Dean Walley

It's wondrous what a hug can do.
A hug can cheer you when you're blue.
A hug can say, "I love you so," or
"Gee, I hate to see you go."
A hug is "Welcome back again!" or
"Great to see you! Where've you been?"
A hug can soothe a small child's pain
And bring a rainbow after the rain.
The hug. There's just no doubt about it.
We scarcely could survive without it.
A hug delights and warms and charms.
It must be why God gave us arms.
Hugs are great for fathers and mothers.
Sweet for sisters, swell for brothers ...
And chances are, your favorite aunts
Love them more than potted plants.
Kittens crave them. Puppies love them.
Heads of state are not above them.
A hug can break the language barrier
And make your travels so much merrier.
No need to fret about your store of 'em.
The more you give,
The more there's more of 'em.
So stretch those arms without delay
And give someone a hug today.

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Call the ECA of FL office for a brochure:
941-951-0606

Kids are Funny

The kindergarten teacher was showing her class an encyclopedia page picturing several national flags. She pointed to the American flag and asked, "What flag is this?" A little girl called out, "That's the flag of our country." "Very good," the teacher said. "And what is the name of our country?" 'Tis of thee," the girl said confidently.

I didn't know if one of my students had learned her colors yet, so I decided to test her. I would point out something and ask what color it was. She was always correct. It was a fun game, so I continued. As she left the class for the day she said, "Teacher, I think you should try to figure out some of these colors yourself!"

Attention Owners and Operators of Private or Faith-based Child Care Centers

The 1999 School Readiness legislation dictates that every local coalition have a private child care provider and a faith-based provider. As an ECA of FL member, we are urging you to try for these positions. Contact your local School Board, County Commissioners and Chambers of Commerce. These are the people who have the power to appoint you. Even if you are not selected, we urge you to attend meetings and help insure that children receive the best possible services in your community!

Principally Speaking

By Anna E. Jackson, Principal
Reprinted from the *Golden Eagle Flyer*,
Golden Glades Elementary School, Coral Springs, FL

Joan Walsh Anglund wrote a series of books with titles that convey hope, warmth and caring. As a classroom teacher, I found myself reading and sharing these books with my students to the extent that they could recite them from memory. It mattered little that these children were classified as educable mentally challenged or learning disabled – they could recite them from memory. As I moved from the classroom I lost sight of these books until I just happened to spot them while browsing in a bookstore one day. I then bought as many as possible of them for my home library, for I wanted my children to share in the warmth and caring spirit conveyed in these books.

I have talked about the books, but I have not shared their titles with you. The titles are: *A Friend is Someone Who Likes You*, *Childhood is a Time of Innocence*, and *Love is a Special Way of Feeling*. Just the other day, I read *Childhood is a Time of Innocence* to my preschooler as a part of his required daily homework. I realized that this book is in direct contrast to childhood for many of our children living in this day and time. According to Anglund, **"childhood is the morning time of life when all is change and wonder**." But for many of our children, childhood is fraught with strife and things seen which sometimes mark them for life. Anglund says, **"childhood begins with being born and ends with growing up**." But many of our children become old before they get to adulthood due to the experiences of their childhood. Anglund states that, **"childhood is a small world of pennies and wishes**." But for many of our children it is also a struggle for survival in a world that they did not create. According to Anglund, **"childhood is a time of sudden friendships and short sorrows**." But for many of our children, childhood is one long horror story of sorrow. Anglund writes that, **"childhood is big stairs and small footprints**." However, for some of our children, childhood is a time of huge obstacles and giant steps. And finally, Anglund says, **"childhood is joy ... and laughter and make-believe**." Yet, for some of our children it is sadness, tears, anger and a tough dose of reality.

No matter how hard we try, it is virtually impossible to shield our children from all of the negative influences that rob them of their childhood and their innocence, so what must we do? We must imbue them with a sense of hope and survival in spite of the things that can take away the most precious time of their lives – childhood. And to accomplish this, we must be patient teachers, parents and caregivers. We must not give up on our children. For were it not for us, what would they have?

Donations

to ECA of Florida Grants & Scholarships

From ECA of Florida Executive Board in memory of Janet Davies' father.

From Mr. and Mrs. Tom Allyn

• • • • •

Did you know ECA of FL awards grants and scholarships to members for college or university courses in ECE, CDA equivalency, CDA Assessment/Renewal, and first time attendees at the ECA of FL conference? Call the ECA of FL office at 941-951-0606 for more information.

ECA of FL Awarded MAG Grant!

NAEYC has awarded a Membership Action Grant to ECA of FL to conduct a seminar day for our Advisory Board on the problem of violence in the lives of young children. An early childhood educator, a practitioner working in the field with violent families, a psychologist, a parent who has had experience of violence in their family and a public policy advocate will make up a panel to disseminate information on violence in Florida and brainstorm possible solutions. The group will focus on activities in the classroom to teach children non-violent approaches to solving problems, how to cope with and report violence. Information on community resources, a comprehensive notebook of materials and methods to educate parents and the community on violence prevention including television monitoring will be disseminated. In these days when young children are experiencing and committing violent acts, this training day is very necessary.

Manuscripts Needed

Children Our Concern (COC), a publication of Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc., is looking for articles to publish in the journal. COC publishes articles that provide a balance between theory and practical application.

TOPICS

Manuscripts published by ECA of FL address both the continuing interests of early childhood professionals and emerging ideas and issues in the field. Among topics considered are emergent curriculum for children from birth through age 8, adult education strategies, effective classroom practices that reflect sound theory and research, program administration, relationships with families, resource and referral systems, and public policy.

COC supports constructivist approaches to child and adult learning, rather than offering prescriptive techniques. Collaborative efforts between academics and practitioners are encouraged. ECA of FL suggests that authors review the Association's journal to become familiar with member interests, current offerings, and publication style before submitting proposals or manuscripts.

MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

Authors are encouraged to submit readable, practical manuscripts that reflect and advance the knowledge base of the profession. Manuscripts should be prepared in APA style (American Psychological Association, 1995). This style includes: typed, double-spaced, wide margins, and cover page with a working title, authors' full names, degrees, affiliations, and mailing address for the lead author.

Length of journal manuscripts ranges from 1000 to 3000 words, including references.

Sharp photographs and graphics (children's art work, charts) to support the text may be submitted for publication consideration as well. Releases for each individual pictured are essential.

Please submit four copies of manuscripts and proposals to expedite the review process. Upon acceptance, authors are asked to submit the document by e-mail or on disk. Please indicate what format and word processing program are used.

REVIEW PROCESS

At least three reviewers and the Editor read submitted journal manuscripts to assure that the content is meritorious and reflects ECA of FL positions. The review process is blind to assure fairness, and generally takes about three months to complete. First authors are notified about the status of their manuscript after a decision has been reached. Manuscripts may be rejected, revisions may be requested, or material may be accepted for editing and publication.

EDITING AND PRODUCTION

ECA of FL maintains the right to edit, design, illustrate, publish, and market each accepted manuscript. Manuscripts are edited to assure accuracy, readability, clarity, completeness, and consistency of text and references. The Editor may communicate with the lead author during this process. Lead authors are asked to approve the edited manuscript for accuracy before production begins.

Annual subscriptions are available for non-members and libraries –
ECA of Florida publications, Children Our Concern, and FACTS Newsletter $15.00

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Winter 1999/2000
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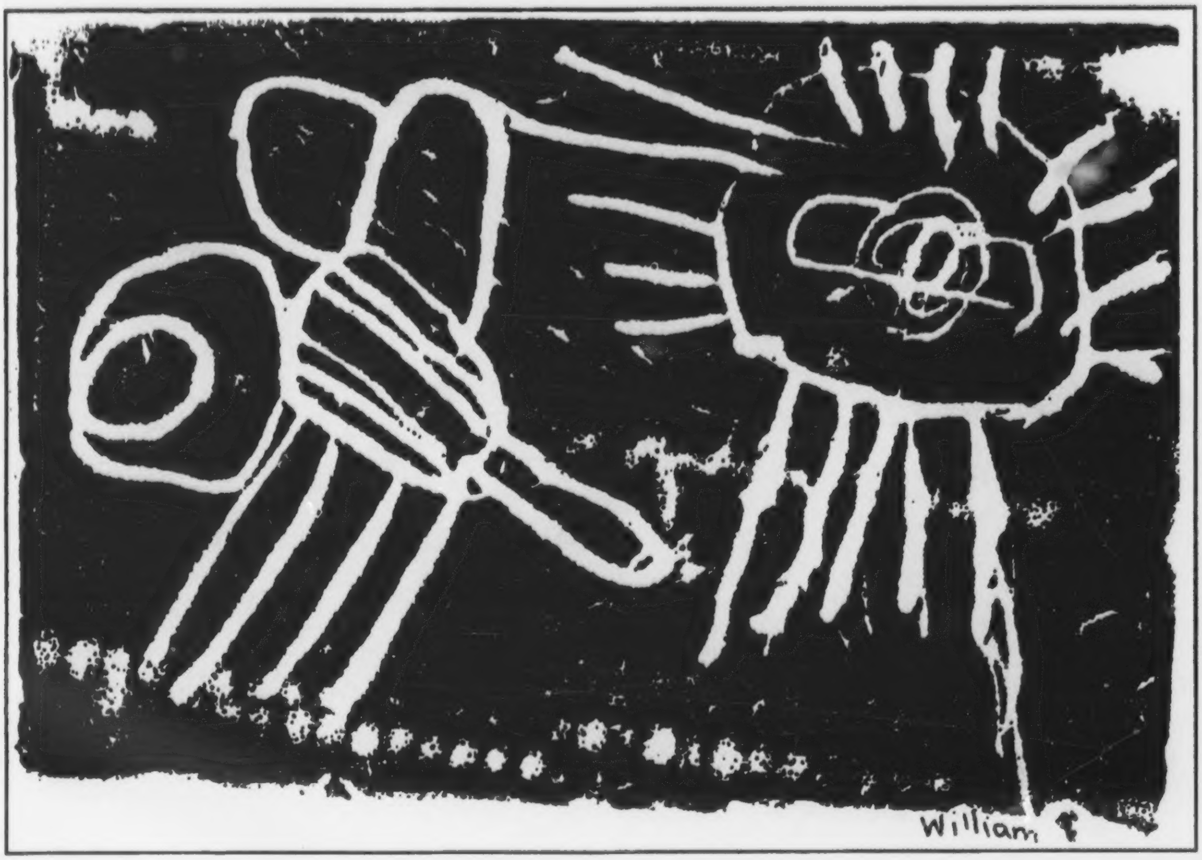

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- *Back to Sleep Campaign Targets Child Care Workers*
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The Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA

The mission of the Early Childhood Association of Florida is to promote the quality of life, learning, and care of young children through leadership, advocacy and professional development of its members in order to enhance their work on behalf of young children and families.

The Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc. (ECA of Florida) represents nearly 4,000 professionals, parents, and other community members who are concerned, interested, and actively involved in enhancing the quality of life for young children. The Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc. is an affiliate of The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA), and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Throughout this publication, references to the Early Childhood Association of Florida will not include the "Inc." designation, but it is expressly understood that the Early Childhood Association of Florida is incorporated properly with the State of Florida.

About
CHILDREN OUR CONCERN

Children Our Concern is in its 25th year as the publication of the Early Childhood Association of Florida. Membership in the Association includes two annual issues of *Children Our Concern*. The Early Childhood Association of Florida does not accept responsibility for statements of fact or opinion which appear in *Children Our Concern*. Acceptance of advertising does not represent the Early Childhood Association of Florida's endorsement of any product or service, nor is the Early Childhood Association of Florida responsible for representation made by advertisers.

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CHILDREN OUR CONCERN

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Drawing by William Selner, 4 years of age, Brentwood School, Gainesville, FL

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President's Letter

A New Century of Promise

Y2K. These two letters and one number put fear into the hearts of many people. "School Readiness." These two words put fear into some educators. Why? As the year 2000 approached, some people thought computers would stop functioning, banks would be unable to handle money, and planes would cease flying. The fear ranged from those spouted by mathematicians and computer specialists all the way to politicians and religious leaders. None was justified.

It was scary to think that our daily lives were so dependent upon machines that might not work, or be confused when we entered a new century. Conversely, there are those in the early care and education field that see the new School Readiness law as just as scary and having as much uncertainty. The law is mandating many changes and change is always difficult. This law has been met with confusion, wonderment, and fear. Will it work? Will all of the children get what they need? Do the people on the coalitions understand the multiplicity of needs of little children? Questions abound and, as of yet, there are no answers.

The State Partnership Board for School Readiness is now seated and meets regularly. Local coalitions are formed, preparing to put into action the ideas contained in the law. The intent of the law is to bring all branches of the early care and learning community together in a great, collaborative effort. The projected result is to bring the young children of Florida the best care and education that we have to offer, whether they are in a child care center, a family child care home, a preschool, or a Head Start classroom. This is a monumental task! Business experts were placed on these coalitions to help bring best business practices into the realm of early care. The optimal outcome will be to provide quality experiences for every child. This new paradigm will succeed, but we all need to get behind this effort and support and aid the work of the coalitions.

It is now a time to THINK of new and creative ways to deliver quality care to children. It is also a time to BELIEVE that it is truly possible. We can offer a variety of programs that meet the needs of every child and every family here in Florida. We can TEACH Florida's youngest and most vulnerable by offering them opportunities and giving them the tools to succeed.

The coalitions can only accomplish part of this vision. The rest is up to you and me and the people in our communities. We must make our policy makers realize that they must fully finance the foundation that underlies all of the early care and education programs. We must convince them that an investment now will reap great benefits in the coming century. They must understand that the people who daily care for children must be given the financial compensation and recognition that a job of this magnitude demands. They must be told that unless they grasp this opportunity and invest the dollars in our children and the programs where they are served so well NOW, that everyone will regret it in the future. Parents, families, adults, teachers, and caregivers must all band together to fight this battle.

It is time for those of us in the early education field to become more active in politics and do our best to influence the decision-making of the local coalitions. You must inform them about the needs of the children and the caregivers. Since research and science has proved years zero to three are vitally important, then it behooves all of those in positions of authority to see that all children have the same educational opportunities regardless of their socioeconomic status. Together, then, we will realize the dream of quality education for ALL of Florida's children.

Yes, Y2K was scary. Most of us were not in a position to influence its outcome. Yet **you** are capable of changing what is happening in School Readiness. You cannot allow policy makers to drop the ball and fail the children in Florida. You must welcome the new century with open arms and make a promise to the children and families that we will be there for them every day and every hour in the future. That means each of us must attend the local coalition meetings and make our voices heard. It means that you need to contact your local legislators and educate them on the need to fully fund quality care. Together, we will be rewarded not only with the light in the children's eyes as they grasp the knowledge and learning that we have to offer, but with the dollars necessary to make that truly happen.

Amy Y. Cordray

Executive Director's Report

As we begin a new year and a new century, ECA of FL is beginning a new venture. It is the most exciting project I've ever been involved with because it will have such a tremendous impact on the early care and education field. ECA of FL, after working over a year in its development, is marketing a packet of materials on the current brain research. It contains information in a multimedia approach to acquaint both parents and professionals working directly with children, with research, theory, and the practical application of the brain research.

As I was presenting the brain information as part of the Starting Points Initiative, I was approached over and over by people saying they understood the implications of the information about brain development, but weren't sure how to apply the knowledge in their classroom. They were already so busy with their daily activities, how could they possibly alter their program to encompass the brain findings? Dr. Bernard Maria and I became friends while he was preparing for the ECA of FL conference in 1998. One day, while in Tallahassee, we went to an outside café and had a soft drink. Our conversation revolved around not only assisting people working daily with children in applying the information on brain research, but also how to reach parents, who are their children's first teachers. We began planning two packets of materials – one geared to parents and one to early care and education professionals. However, the logistics of our discussion seemed so large. I couldn't even fathom the numbers. Dr. Maria was thinking globally; I was thinking of Florida. From that afternoon grew our idea of one packet that met both needs. After all, who better to inform parents than their child's caregiver? Dr. Maria outlined a video that shadowed his ECA of FL talk and I made a list of items on the market that explained brain research. What was missing, at that time, was a book of activities to help teachers plan daily to optimally stimulate a child's brain. I decided to write a book that would not only explain the brain research simply, but would be a reference book that teachers could use to gather ideas for their daily classroom planning. The activities are divided into social, emotional, physical and intellectual domains, but also by senses and multiple intelligences. It includes over 350 different activities that can be used in a variety of settings. All of the activities had been a part of my teaching repertoire during my 35 years in the classroom. Today, I am happy to report, the book is published and a part of the brain packet.

ECA of FL piloted the brain packets in three counties: Sarasota, Pinellas, and DeSoto. It took months of preparation, but the results are stunning. Thanks to the funders in those counties who were looking for a beginning solution to School Readiness, 500 child care centers, family child care homes, elementary schools with pre-k, kindergarten, and Head Start classrooms have the packets. Each county provided training with the packets to ensure that people working with young children had not only this library of references, but also the ability to use and apply the implications of the brain research. We know that thousands of children will benefit from this work. ECA of FL will have a real impact on the future generation.

Our goal is to have these packets made free of charge to every early care and education setting in Florida. Currently we are working to find funders so that this information will be dispersed quickly throughout the state. For more information, call me at the ECA of FL office or visit our website at www.ecaoffl.org. (See brochure in center.)

Suzanne Gellens

ECA of FL is on the World Wide Web.
Get the latest information at:
http://ECAofFL.org

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SECA Representative's Report

Early Childhood Association of Florida is still the largest association in the Southern region with 3,841 members in 1999. Your membership shows that you are truly interested in the southern issues concerning our children and are true professionals.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our own Suzanne Gellens for her outstanding leadership as President of the Southern Early Childhood Association for two years. There were times when things got rough, but she handled them very professionally. Under her guidance, the Board of Directors developed criteria for selecting an Executive Director and the re-organization of the commissions helped the association work more effectively. I would like to welcome our new President, Diane Lawler-Prince. She is from Arkansas. I hope that many of you cast your vote. Our new President Elect is Philip A. Acord from Tennessee.

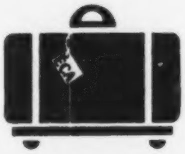
As we enter the new millennium I am sure many of you are asking yourselves what does the Southern Early Childhood Association have to offer to an individual member? Here are some of the benefits: (1) *Dimensions of Early Childhood* journal on a quarterly basis provides practitioner-oriented articles to the individual members; (2) *SECA Reporter* semi-annually includes information on state affiliates' activities and "how to's" for state affiliate boards, public policy issues, and new children's books. State and local affiliates and individuals will be asked to contribute to the newsletter to share our successes throughout the region; (3) Discounts on conferences and training registration. Membership provides significant discounts on SECA sponsored activities; (4) SECA members may qualify for a MBNA credit card issued by the Southern Early Childhood Association; (5) SECA offers a wide variety of publications and books which deal with the "hot topics" of early childhood education; (6) SECA can assist members in becoming published authors through *Dimensions of Early Childhood*; (7) Members may apply to be certified as a Southern Early Childhood trainer to provide SECA institutes and seminars throughout the various SECA states. SECA trainers are financially compensated for this activity; (8) Membership in SECA meets the CDA requirements for membership in a professional organization.

The Southern Early Childhood Association conference will be April 6 – 8, 2000 in Birmingham, Alabama at the Jefferson Civic Center and the Sheraton Civic Center Hotel. The theme for the conference is "In Concert for Children." Over one hundred interest sessions have been planned for your professional development. Keynote speakers will be Mr. Al with rocking and rolling music, Craig and Sharon Ramey on School Readiness and parenting, and Hedda Sharapan from Mr. Rogers. This year the Leadership Seminar and the Public Policy Institute will be combined. It will be conducted by Wheelock College. Join us and meet and greet old and new friends.

Beverly Oglesby

Early Childhood Association of Florida 45th Annual Conference
September 28 - 30, 2000
Orlando, Florida
Radisson Hotel Universal **(formerly Twin Towers)**

Keynote Speakers:
Glenda Bean **(Executive Director SECA, Little Rock, AK)**
La Doris Bias-Davis **(Multicultural storyteller from Atlanta, GA)**
"Miss Maggi" Rosenberg **(Music & movement, Miami, FL)**



Children: Our Passport to a Brighter Tomorrow

Meet ECA of FL Lobbyist Linda Vaughn

An Opportunity to be Heard

> *If you think you're too small to be effective, you've never spent the night in a tent with a mosquito.*
>
> *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*
>
> – Margaret Mead
>
> *"What the best and wisest parents want for their own child – that must the community want for all children."*
>
> – John Dewey
> American educator and philosopher (1859-1952)

The Florida Partnership for School Readiness

The 1999 Florida legislature passed the School Readiness Act to increase children's chances of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society. Some of the aspects of the programs are that they be developmentally appropriate, research-based, involve parents as their child's first teacher, serve as preventative measures for children at risk of future school failure, enhance the educational readiness of eligible children, and support family education.

To achieve these goals, the law established the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, which is charged with creating a process for establishing local coalitions, programs, and a unified funding stream. Their responsibilities will include overseeing First Start, Even Start, Pre-kindergarten Early Intervention, Head Start, programs offered by public and private providers, migrant pre-kindergarten, Title I, subsidized child care, and teen parent programs. Susan Muenchow (formerly the Executive Director of the Florida Children's Forum) was appointed the Executive Director.

The 1999 law created the State Coordinating Council for School Readiness Programs (SCCSR). The Council was created to assure coordination among the programs and advise the Partnership. The Council consists of fifteen members representing subsidized child care, pre-kindergarten early intervention programs, Head Start programs, health care programs, private providers, faith-based providers, programs for children with disabilities, and parents of preschool children. Ann Levy, ECA of Florida Past President, is the chair and Suzanne Gellens, ECA of Florida Executive Director, is on the executive committee.

Conversations with several of the Partnership Board members reflected their attitudes, expectations and hopes. All comments are their own feelings and observations and they are not speaking on behalf of the Board.

The Partnership Meetings are open for anyone to attend. For information on the location, time and agenda, or other information, you can call the Partnership in Tallahassee at 850-488-0337. More information about the coalitions is available on the Florida Children's Forum website http://www.fcforum.org.

For the full text of the legislation, analysis and other information, log on to "Online Sunshine" at www.leg.state.fl.us.

Linda Vaughn, B.A., legislative lobbyist, has influenced policy and appropriations in Florida since 1974; Tallahassee, Florida.

Joe Chapman, Chair of the Partnership, Banker, Panama City

The Partnership is the most useful tool to bring people together to focus on quality child care and school readiness. There are good people in all of the programs – Head Start, Early Start, etc., and our focus is to bring everyone together so we can understand our mutual issues. Certainly, salaries for early child care workers and educators are a very important part of all of that. The Partnership is not only an umbrella for the local coalitions, it will also provide the mechanics to provide structure, keep focused on the child, and effectively measure outcome.

The first big problem is poverty devastates a child 's ability to develop mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially. Another priority is adequate pay for child care workers and educators. We cannot have quality programs without quality people. Quality people have to be paid adequately or we will not solve the serious problem of staff turnover. The next priority is the issues of programs. What really does work, stimulates, and makes a difference? This is the most difficult one to identify and harder to determine.

The trillion dollars of surplus we have in this country should be put to work for children. We have the tools to address these problems, and we had better use them.

David Lawrence, Professor, Florida Atlantic University, Miami

Every child deserves all the basics. It is not only a wise community investment, it's a moral imperative. Classically in this county, when people try to do something about the poor start so many children get in this world, they pick disadvantaged neighborhoods and set up pilot programs. Each community decides what it wants for all children within that community. Money is spent on non-integrated, non-coordinated programs. "It's as though we are building the plane and flying it at the same time." We need a common system to fully carry out universal readiness in this country like there is in Europe. We can never fundamentally make progress unless we do this.

It will be very difficult to achieve and accomplish the goals of the legislation. The coalitions will be responsible for disbursing tens of millions of dollars used for various activities that help the child get ready for school. It is not just a question of how we more wisely spend the dollars we have now, but rather, what is the optimal way to make every child ready for success in school and life. We cannot get there unless we have a broad focus. We need far more than the 18 to 25 people who serve on the coalitions. The entire community is needed.

Mary "Bebe" Fearnside, Retired Preschool Director and Alachua County School Board Member, St. Augustine

In a short period of time, the Board has come a long way toward identifying needs. Even though there has been good collaboration, the local coalitions will need a lot of help. They will have to deal with issues of liability, fiscal agents, and other areas that early childhood people have not been involved with. This is more like a business approach. Our strength will come from the business and private sectors working together. One of the beauties of the legislation is that for 50 plus years, the choir has been trying to make people listen to words like "quality," "ratios" and "family involvement." People have just patted our heads and said, 'That's real nice." We have a chance of people from the private sector, business, and government all being involved. We will have to walk carefully in dealing with budget issues and blended funds. All budgets affecting children must be committed to quality and equity for everybody. There is a big difference between access to service, and access to *quality service equally for all children.* I have a positive feeling about the members serving on the Partnership. They care about children. They have learned a lot and they are committed to learning more.

Dr. Sandra Adams, Vice Chair, Sarasota

The Partnership Board must determine what it means "to be ready," and what measurements should be used for assessment. Dr. Adams wants to, "Make sure measurements are to help the child – not label them or punish programs."

Susan Muenchow, Executive Director, Tallahassee

"The Partnership function is to develop statewide performance standards and a uniform measurement system. We want to ensure the validity of the system, so that the results have credibility. This will also require training of the people conducting the assessment."

Dr. Ann Levy, Chair, State Coordinating Council for School Readiness Programs, Tallahassee

The Council is to advise the Board because the fear was that some members of the Board would not have been involved in day-to-day child care and early education. The relationship is still evolving. The Board is trying to find its way and are working to develop a strong sense of direction. Many of the Council members were on the *State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services.*

Congratulations

to our own Beverly C. Oglesby, SECA Representative, for being selected to serve as a new member to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Early Childhood/ Generalist Standards Committee. This committee will help to revise the standards that enable teachers to receive national certification.

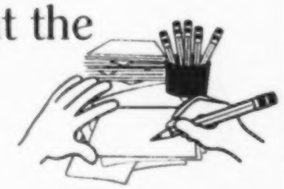
ECA of FL congratulates these affiliate members serving on local coalitions

Charlotte: Margie Blackwell, Anna Brookbank, Becky Peters, Karen Wedemeyer
North Florida: Martha Hemphill, Jean Johnson, Gwen Scott
Hardee: Tomasita Cortez, Charlene Edwards, Mae Gambler
Highlands: Mabel Aylward, Barbara Mainster
Hillsborough: Judy Zimmerman
Indian River: Pat Hickman
Leon: Ann Levy
Martin: Pat Hickman
North Central Florida: Nancy Fraser Williams
Northwest Florida: Dr. Carolyn Barnes, Lavonne Haven, Becky Kirsch
Okaloosa: Jan Beasley, Kathleen Haight, Anita Martin, MaryAnn Mochan, Beverly Sandlin
Okeechobee: Pat Hickman
Orange: Marguerite Orban
Palm Beach: Debra Coney
Pasco: Sister Roberta Bailey, Maria Crosby, Toni Watkins
Pinellas: Betty Bohan, Diane Brown, Guy Cooley, William Fillmore, Gail Robertson
Port St. Lucie: Linda Hall, Pat Hickman
Sarasota: Denise Candea, Suzanne Gellens, Nancy Lindsley, Judith Vander Wilt
Walton: Jan Beasley, Penny Cox, Betty Dietrich, Kathleen Haight, MaryAnn Mochan
University School Readiness Liaisons: Dr. Craig Jones, Pensacola; Dr. Kay Halverson, Naples

PLEASE NOTIFY ECA OF FL BUSINESS OFFICE OF COALITION MEMBERS IN YOUR AFFILIATE.

The ECA of Florida Board of Directors donated $200 to North Carolina for helping child care centers affected by the flooding from Hurricane Floyd.

ECA of Florida wants YOUR opinion! Please fill out the survey on page 51.



CHILDREN
OUR CONCERN

EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA

The mission of the Early Childhood Association of Florida is to promote the quality of life, learning and care of young children through leadership, advocacy and professional development of its members in order to enhance their work on behalf of young children and families.

Position Statement Regarding The Effect of Guns on Children

The Early Childhood Association of Florida represents over 4,000 professionals, parents and other community members who are concerned, interested, and actively involved in enhancing the quality of life for young children and families.

The Issue

Children are directly and indirectly being exposed to guns and violence produced from guns. The purpose of handguns and semi-automatic guns is to harm and kill. Children are being placed in harmful situations (at risk) because of the abundance of such weapons in their daily lives.

Background and Analysis

Children are being placed in dangerous situations due to availability of hand and semi-automatic guns in our communities. No longer are children protected by their innocence and age. One example is The North Valley Jewish Community Day School in San Fernando, CA, where a man wielding a gun held children hostage. Random gunshots and deliberate gunfire aimed at and around children is possible because of the easy availability of guns meant for harming and killing. Children in the U.S. under 15 are 12 times more likely to die from gunfire than children in 25 other industrialized countries combined. Nationally, homicide is the third leading cause of death among children aged 5 to 14. According to the 1999 report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 559 Florida children, aged 0-19, died from guns between the years 1995-1997.

Some people believe that there is a need to possess a gun for their own protection. Adding guns to the community promotes more gun availability.

One successful approach to curb the incidence of gun violence and gun availability is Project Exile, which occurred in Richmond, Virginia. This project:

- Federally prosecutes all felons with guns, gun/drug cases, and gun/domestic violence cases.
- The local police, state police, federal investigators, and local and federal prosecutors promptly arrest, incarcerate, detain, prosecute and sentence armed criminals using stiffer bond rules and sentencing guidelines in federal court.
- A community coalition formed creating an outreach/education effort through various media. The impact of this project has curbed criminal behavior and violence and quelled tolerance for gun availability in the community. Replication of this project is being studied in many cities throughout the country and has gained support in the U.S. Attorney's Office and U.S. Congress.

Recommendation

Support an effort to protect children from harm by limiting the availability of civilian use of handguns and semi-automatic weapons.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2000

January	ECA of FL and NAEYC fiscal year begins. ECA of FL Executive Board Retreat and Training.
March 1	Deadline for submission of articles for *ECA of FL FACTS* due to Executive Director.
March 7-9	Children's Week, Tallahassee.
March 24-25	ECA of FL Executive Board Meeting, Gainesville.
March 25	Full Advisory Board Meeting and "Violence Prevention Seminar", Gainesville.
April 6-8	Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) Conference, Birmingham, AL.
May	Report on Committee Chairs due from Commission on Committees.
May 1	Suggested submission date for ECA of FL Conference proposals; MAP Grant deadline.
June 1	Executive Board Meeting, Central Region. Advisory Board meeting.
June 4-7	NAEYC Professional Development Conference, San Francisco, CA.
June 10	Nominations Report due to Executive Board.
June 30	Deadline for Affiliate renewals to be sent to office.
July 31	Barbara Finck Award recommendations due to Professional Recognition & Awards Committee.
July 31	ECA of FL Conference Scholarship Applications due.
August 1	Local Affiliates' Financial Report due to Financial Officer.
September 28	ECA of FL Advisory Board Meeting, Radisson Hotel Universal, Orlando, FL.
Sept. 28-30	ECA of FL Annual Conference, Orlando. ECA of FL Executive Board Meeting, Orlando.
Sept. 28	Public Policy Luncheon, Orlando.
Sept. 29	Members Luncheon Annual Meeting. Installation of Officers, Orlando.
October 15	Deadline for submission of articles for *Children Our Concern* to Executive Director.
November 1	ECA of FL officers assume duties.
November 9-11	NAEYC Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA.
December 1	Membership Action Plan (MAP) Application due to ECA of FL office.
December 17	Deadline for nominations to Nominating Chair.

The Read-to-Me Family Literacy Project

The Read-to-Me Family Literacy Project which was funded by the Knight Foundation, ECA of FL Map Grant, and the Leon Association for the Education of Young Children (LAEYC) has been concluded.

Over the course of the project which began in the fall of 1995 and ended in August 1999, about 10,900 books were distributed to about 4,400 children and their parents, to family child care providers, and early childhood teachers.

Primary recipients of the totes containing books and a Read to Me brochure were the children and parents at the *Tallahassee Democrat*, the local newspaper, on Tuesday mornings, when First Birthday photos were taken. Other recipients included the following: Children enrolled in the Early Intervention and Pre-K classes in Leon County Schools and participating child care programs; children in Even Start and First Start programs; family child care providers with Episcopal Child Care, Inc., and Kids, Inc.; kindergarten, first and second grade students at a Title I elementary school; student-parents in the Teen Age Parent program; parents participating in workshops sponsored by the Early Childhood Department of Leon County Schools, and by Kids, Inc. (Gadsden Co.), participants in the Spring Conference 1999 for LAEYC and Kids, Inc. and in other workshops. Some Spanish language story books were also given to a child care program in Gadsden County which serves migrant families.

This was a time-consuming, but very rewarding project. It was rewarding to work with dedicated volunteers from LAEYC, and the Alpha Kappa Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, and with the *Tallahassee Democrat* staff. It was such a pleasure to see the smiles and appreciation of those receiving the books and brochures.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline B. Clemens, Ph.D.
Read-to-Me Family Literacy Project Coordinator

ECA of Florida Scholarships and Grants 2000

The Early Childhood Association of Florida has the following scholarships and grants available to members.

EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

Deadline: 60 days prior to tuition deadline

Application submitted by: Self

Amount of award: Maximum $500

Provides financial assistance to complete a course in early childhood education, childhood education and/or early childhood administration at an accredited school or college in Florida.

CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP

Deadline: July 30

Application submitted by: Local affiliate

Amount of award: $250+

Assists a member in attending ECA of FL fall conference for the first time. This award includes registration, advocacy luncheon, banquet, membership luncheon and $250 for expenses.

MEMBERSHIP ACTION PLAN (MAP) GRANT

Deadlines: December 1 and May 1

Application submitted by: Local affiliate

Amount of award: Maximum $500

Available to member affiliate groups for the following purposes:

1. To increase membership or to increase diversity of membership.
2. To increase the involvement of affiliate members in the organization.
3. To increase the knowledge and skills of members in working with children/families.
4. To promote networking with other related organizations.

MAP START-UP GRANT

Deadline: None

Application submitted by: Group wishing to affiliate with ECA of FL.

Amount of award: $50 to $150

Available for the purpose of recruiting and maintaining enough members in an area to become an ECA of FL affiliate.

EMERGENCY AND DISASTER RELIEF

Deadline: None

Application submitted by: Any member

Amount of award: Undetermined

Provides financial and/or manual support to centers who have suffered physical damage due to accidents or acts of nature. The aim of this grant is to help repair and open the center as quickly as possible.

Applications being developed or revised include: CDA and CDA equivalency; Affiliate membership awards; NAEYC Accreditation; and Outstanding Member awards.

For more information and applications contact:

Suzanne Gellens, Executive Director; 3049 Browning Street; Sarasota, Florida 34237-7307
Phone: 941-951-0606; Fax: 941-952-0116; E-mail: ECAofFL@earthlink.net

Donations to ECA of Florida Grants & Scholarships

From Dottie Ports: In memory of her parents, Stephen R. and Dorothy V. McNabb; In memory of Loretta M. Hatfield.

From Suzanne and Paul Gellens: In memory of Carolyn Van Buskirk's husband, Dutch; In memory of Suzi Jamrog's brother; Speedy recovery of Sandy Crawford's husband; Speedy recovery for Herbert Peaslee.

From Janet Allyn: In memory of Janet Aversa's daughter Sherri.

From ECA of FL: In memory of Suzi Jamrog's brother; In memory of Dutch Van Buskirk; In memory of Donna Shreve's father-in-law; In memory of Phyllis Tucker's father; In memory of Janet Davies' father.

From Janet Davies: For her father.

Dr. Jacque Clemens: Donation from sale of books at conference.

Dr. Virginia Peaslee: In memory of Fay Green, husband of Dr. Virginia Green, retired Professor of EC at FSU.

Scholarship donations made with conference registration: Mary Bondarin, Sandy Bontempo, Kathleen Bowser, Mary Lou Brotherson, Barbara Brown, Betty Butler, Joyce Davoll, Darlene Demarie-Dreblow, Vicki Folds, Alisa Ghazvini, Carol Grabill, Ted Granger, Katherine Kamiya, Ann Levy, Veronica Mosher, Beverly Oglesby, Christine Readdick, Janice Sean, Lois Schneider, Karen Serrell, Christine Tate, Wilma Wilhelm, and C. Louise Wilson.

Donation made with membership renewal: Marcia Verzaro-O'Brien.

Call for Proposals for the 45th Annual Conference

Early Childhood Association of Florida
September 29-30, 2000 ◆ Radisson Hotel Universal ◆ Orlando, Florida

The program committee for the Early Childhood Association of Florida 2000 Conference is seeking creative, innovative and informative sessions for our conference. Conference sessions should focus on trends, practices and issues in early childhood education, birth through age eight. Program tracks will be one hour or two hours with featured presentations for three hours. We are happy to offer a complimentary conference registration for one person per hour of presentation (however, no funds are available to pay presenters). Please be prepared to provide your own handouts and audiovisual aids (including extension cords). Audiovisual equipment will not be available on-site. Priority given if proposal submitted by May 1, 2000.

PROCEDURES

❶ Proposals should include:

A. Name, address, work and home telephone numbers, professional job title, and educational level of presenter.
B. Name, address, work and home telephone numbers, professional job title, and educational level of co-presenter.
C. Title of presentation that clearly and concisely describes its content.
D. Choose one track from the following list:
   Nutrition/Health, Family Support, School Age, Administration, Learning Settings, Staff Development, Child Development, Family Child Care, Music, Curriculum, Exceptional Children, Diversity, Guidance, Advocacy, or Infant/Toddler.
E. Indicate desired session length. Choose Friday or Saturday, a.m. or p.m. Please indicate if you're willing to repeat.
F. Indicate if your presentation is appropriate for "Make and Take." Include content and expected cost of materials. Limited funds are available for reimbursement.
G. A short outline and concise description of topic, listing outcome objectives (one page only).
H. A 20-word maximum abstract of the presentation for use in the conference program.

❷ Mail three copies of the proposal. Attach resumes of the presenters to one copy. Send to:

Suzanne Gellens , Early Childhood Association of Florida
3049 Browning Street / Sarasota, FL 34237; Phone 941-951-0606

Early Childhood Association of Florida
Financial Report 1998-99

Revenue			
Contributions		$	338
PreConference & Conference Revenues		$	156,417
Membership Dues		$	35,294
Interest		$	2,391
Gift Shop/Other		$	3,539
	Total	$	197,979
Expenses			
Advertising		$	1,975
Awards/Scholarships/Grants		$	5,976
Conference Direct Costs		$	68,549
Contract Services (Office/Computer)		$	7,643
Insurance		$	288
Legal/Accounting		$	5,748
Meals - Board/Office/Affiliates/Committees		$	5,107
Office Expenses		$	7,715
Print/Postage - Board/Committees		$	10,331
Registration		$	590
Wages/Benefits		$	43,635
Supplies - Board/Committees		$	5,646
Travel - Board/Committees/Affiliates		$	24,418
	Total	$	187,621

Video Lending Library

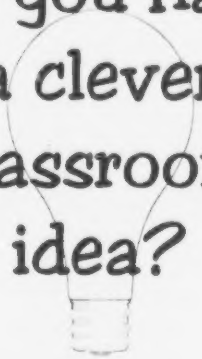
EARLY
CHILDHOOD
ASSOCIATION
OF FLORIDA

**Video
Lending
Library**

A Member Service

The ECA of FL Video Lending Library is a free benefit for members, with a library of 75 up-to-date videos on a variety of topics. These are useful for your own education, professional development, and parenting workshops.

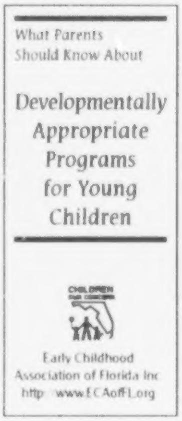
Call the ECA of FL office for a brochure:
941-951-0606



Do you have a clever classroom idea?

**Send ideas to
ECA of FL Business Office,
3049 Browning St.
Sarasota, FL 34237**

ECA of FL Brochures



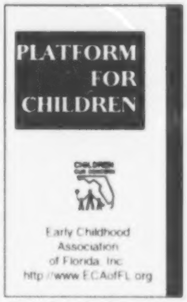
What Parents
Should Know About

Developmentally
Appropriate
Programs
for Young
Children

Early Childhood
Association of Florida Inc
http://www.ECAofFL.org

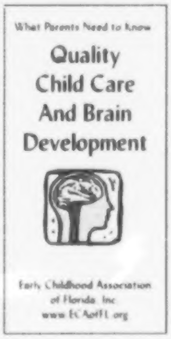
*EARLY
CHILDHOOD
ASSOCIATION
OF
FLORIDA*

*Position
Statement*



PLATFORM
FOR
CHILDREN

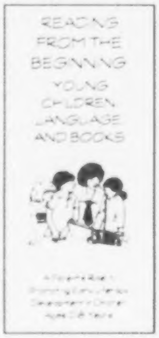
Early Childhood
Association
of Florida, Inc
http://www.ECAofFL.org



What Parents Need to Know

Quality
Child Care
And Brain
Development

Early Childhood Association
of Florida, Inc
www.ECAofFL.org



READING
FROM THE
BEGINNING
YOUNG
CHILDREN,
LANGUAGE
AND BOOKS

Single
Parenting

a brochure for divorced and widowed parents

- What Parents Should Know About Developmentally Appropriate Programs for Young Children
- Reading From the Beginning: Young Children, Language, and Books (A Parent's Role in Promoting Early Literacy Development in Children Ages 0-8 Years)
- Single Parenting ... a brochure for divorced and widowed parents
- Platform for Children
- Developmentally Appropriate Programs for Infants and Toddlers
- What Parents Should Know About Quality Child Care and Brain Development

25¢ each or 20¢ each for 10 or more
(call for shipping and handling costs)

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

To order brochures contact
Suzanne Gellens
ECA of FL Business Office
3049 Browning Street
Sarasota, FL 34237
941-951-0606
fax: 941-952-0116
E-mail: ecaoffl@earthlink.com

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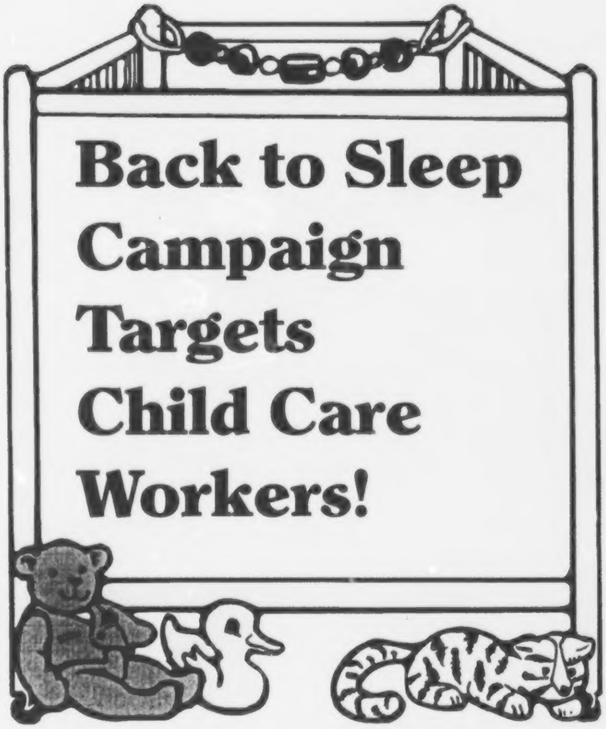


Back to Sleep Campaign Targets Child Care Workers!

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the third most frequent cause of death for children under one year of age. The good news is that the SIDS death rate has decreased in Florida and the entire United States. This decrease is thought to be due to the Back to Sleep campaign that promotes back sleeping for healthy infants.

The Back to Sleep campaign began in 1994 focusing on parents and health care workers. In 1993, the SIDS rate in Florida was almost one death per 1,000 live births but by 1998 the SIDS rate had fallen to 0.6 deaths per 1,000 live births. This is a decrease of nearly 40%.

Recent research has found that infants placed to sleep on their stomachs when they are accustomed to sleeping on their backs puts them at high risk for SIDS. This unaccustomed stomach sleeping may partly explain the high proportion of SIDS cases found in child care settings.

Due to this research, the new focus of the Back to Sleep campaign is on child care workers, grandmothers and other secondary caregivers. Unless the baby's doctor has said no to back sleeping, consistent **BACK (sleeping) IS BEST** for healthy infants for their entire first year.

In Georgia, the state is encouraging all child care providers to become Back to Sleep facilities. Back to Sleep facilities are those in which parents are told that all infants will be put to sleep on their backs unless a note is brought in from the infant's pediatrician which states that the baby should be placed in another position to sleep. These facilities will display a prominent sign that indicates that it is a Back to Sleep facility.

The National SIDS & Infant Death Program Support Center is developing a simple waiver form, which child care providers/centers could require parents and the baby's pediatrician to sign if they do not want their babies placed on their backs to sleep.

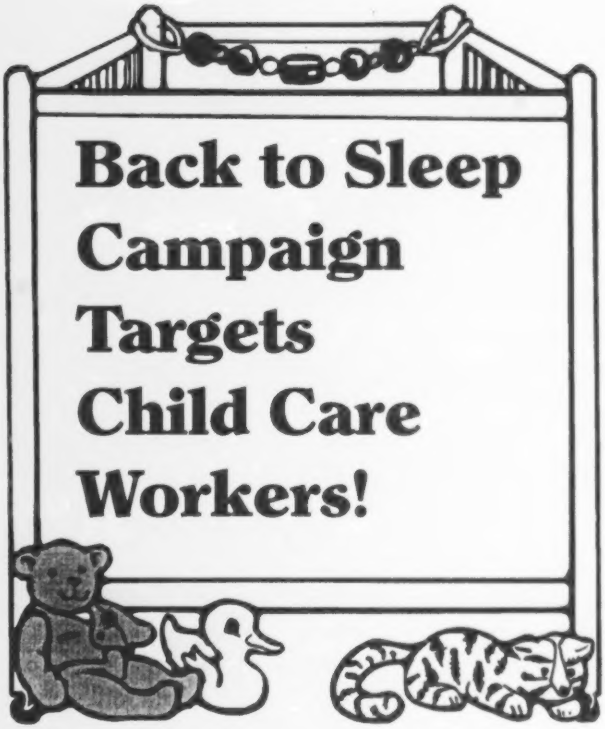
"Back to Sleep" brochures, posters, stickers to put on cribs and the other "Back to Sleep" materials are available from the National "Back to Sleep" Campaign by calling 1-800-505-CRIB. The materials are FREE. (Note: These brochures were printed several years ago and still discuss the side sleeping position as an alternative to the back sleeping position. However, the side sleeping position is not recommended anymore because babies placed on their sides have a higher likelihood of spontaneously turning to their stomachs.)

Frequently Asked Questions

Should healthy babies ever be placed on their stomachs? Yes. When they are awake and being observed a certain amount of awake "tummy time" is important for their shoulder motor development.

What if the baby doesn't seem to sleep well in the back position? Preference for sleeping position appears to be a learned behavior among infants from birth to 4 to 6 months of age. The young infant placed in the back sleeping position will become accustomed to this position.

Susan Arbor, MSW, MPA, Florida Department of Health, Division of Maternal and Child Health, Tallahassee, Florida.



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Susan Arbor, MSW, MPA, Florida Department of Health, Division of Maternal and Child Health, Tallahassee, Florida.

National SIDS & Infant Death Program Support Center
1-800-638-7437 or 410-415-6628; www.sids-id-psc.org

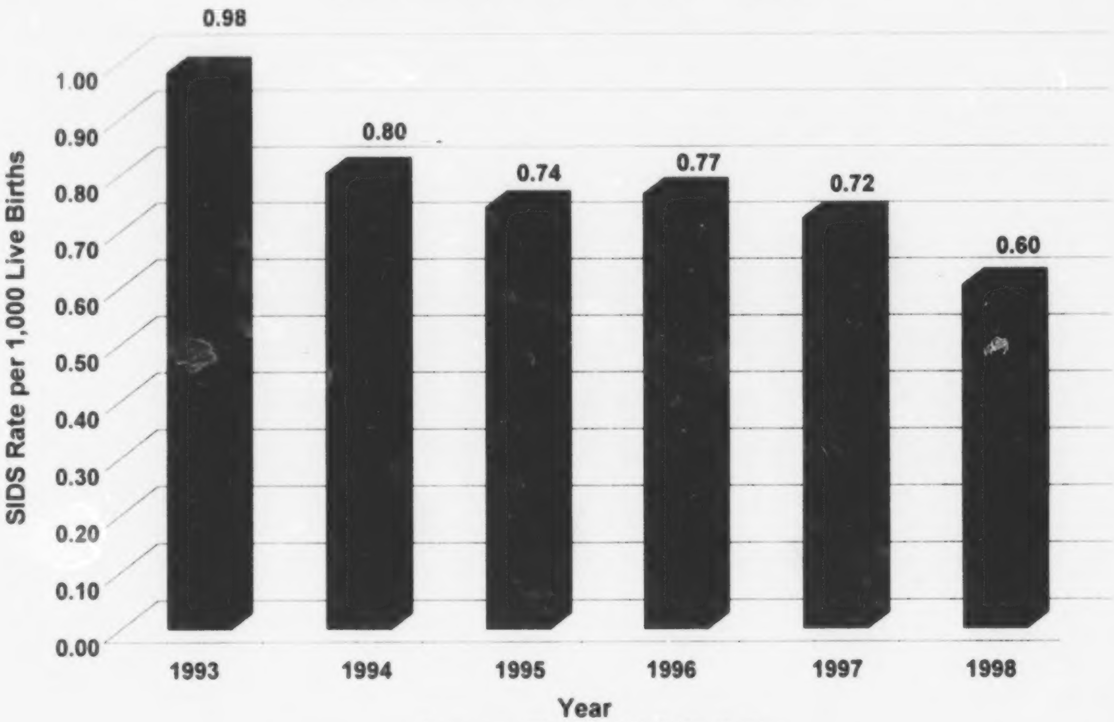
National SIDS Resource Center
703-821-8955; www.circsol.com/sids

Florida SIDS Alliance
1-800-SIDS-FLA
Provides support and information to families.

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
1-800-638-2772; www.cpsc.gov

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org

Florida SIDS Rate 1993 - 1998



Source: Florida Vital Statistics

To my dear fellow child care providers,

Taking responsibility for the care of someone else's baby is no small undertaking! There are so many things to consider in terms of infant safety, whether you are caring for a baby for a few hours or a whole day or night. Did you know about changes in baby care that may reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)? I would like to share with you information that may help prevent a tragedy like SIDS from happening to a baby in your care.

1. Babies who sleep on their tummies seem more at risk for SIDS than babies who sleep on their backs. So, unless the baby's doctor has said not to, always place the baby on his or her BACK for naps and nighttime. (When the baby is awake and supervised - time on their tummy is good for their development.)

2. Babies must sleep on a FIRM mattress (avoid couches – they are usually too soft or babies can roll to the floor or into the corners and cover their faces). The mattress should be covered with a tightly fitted sheet that tucks far under. There should be no thin plastic bags, quilts, sheepskins, or pillows under the baby, or bumper pads or soft toys in the crib.

3. Some doctors say that the baby should not share a bed with anyone. Other doctors say that sleeping together with the baby is O.K as long as the baby is on his or her BACK on a FIRM mattress (avoid sofas), without soft bedding underneath or on top of the baby. Babies should never sleep with another child or adult who doesn't wake up easily, or in the same bed as someone who has been drinking alcohol or doing drugs.

4. Doctors also think that being TOO HOT – dressed in too many clothes and covered with blankets, especially in a warm room – can contribute to SIDS. The babies in your care should sleep in light clothing in the summer and in warm clothing in the winter. (The temperature that is comfortable to you will be comfortable to the baby.)

5. The risk for SIDS increases when people SMOKE near the baby. Make sure that no one comes near the baby, in the baby's room, or in the same car as the baby with a lighted cigarette, pipe, or cigar.

6. If the baby you care for is being breastfed, encourage his or her mother to leave a bottle of breast milk for feedings. Breast milk may prevent some infections in little babies. Encourage parents to make and keep their baby's well-baby appointments and insist that they get care for their baby's colds, fevers, rashes and tummy troubles.

For your peace of mind and for the safety of the babies in your charge, I hope that you will join me in combining the best of our own "know-how" with this new information that may reduce the danger of SIDS. Please share these tips with other child care providers. We all need to do our part in providing a safe environment for the smallest ones in our care!

From one child care provider to another

Please copy this letter and distribute it to anyone caring for infants.

Creative Thinkers Coming Right Up

Creativity is the soul of survival and success. The creative thinker holds the key which will open doors – doors to the future – doors to problem solving – doors to life.

But as educators, are we doing all we can to provide our students with that key? Are we stifling their creative juices with mundane tasks and conditional approval? Society demands that schools foster academic success, promote early reading, encourage scientific expertise, develop writing talent, and reach a myriad of other goals. Little attention is given to development of the creative process. It is time to readdress the issue of creativity development in our children.

Developing the creative process

In striving to meet the demands of current curricula, we may overlook simple steps which would foster the creative process. These thinking processes must be developed in order to enable the child to apply them to the curriculum required and to all aspects of life. Such implementation is mandatory and the responsibility falls on the educators involved.

Creativity - what do we really know?

Despite years of research, certain aspects of creativity continue to be disputed (Davis, 1992). These aspects include such rudimentaries as definition, source, description, origin, and even the very nature of the process. However, there is consensus among researchers in recognizing a specific personality profile (Torrance, 1962). This profile includes the following attributes: emotional sensitivity, altruism, indifference to conformity and convention, preference for asymmetry, adventurous, courageous, curious, bold, confident, and risk-taking.

This profile closely mirrors that of the self-actualized individual (Maslow, 1968). Such an individual is confident enough to be a risk-taker, think new thoughts, and try new ideas. (Rogers, 1962; Maslow, 1968; Torrance, 1962; Davis, 1998.)

Commonality between the two profiles has fostered a view of creativity which relates self-esteem to the creative process. (Baron, 1963; Kagan, 1967; Kurtines, 1989.) In a study conducted by the author, (Kurtines, 1989) a pre-post quasi-experimental study found that among 71 preschoolers, a self-esteem intervention program (DUSO) (Dinkmeyer and Dinkmeyer, 1982) was effective in elevating self-esteem. Creativity was assessed at pre and post levels using the Thinking Creatively in Action and Movement, TCAM, (Torrance, 1981). In addition to self-esteem being elevated, creativity was elevated without specific creativity training. A significant relationship was found between self-esteem and creativity, with the results implying that positive self-esteem is a likely route to achieving creativity.

To varying degrees, all of us have potential to think creatively. Often, we are surrounded by opportunities to express creativity, but the expression is stifled as we succumb to societal pressures to conform. Expression of our creative thoughts get pushed aside as we succumb to the norm, "the status-quo," where it's safe and non-threatening. We lose the courage to chance risk-taking or standing alone in a crowd. We become followers.

From this perspective of creativity expression, one could conclude that the ideal approach to creativity development would begin by fostering a positive self-image and develop risk-takers.

Ready to begin

If we expect our children to succeed and survive in this fast paced, complex world, we must arm them with the necessary techniques and skills to be creative problem solvers. Ideally, we must begin in the formative years and address the prerequisites of self-esteem.

The following proposed steps are user-friendly, easily implemented and will heighten creativity. Additionally, it is proposed that we begin by address-

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ing the issue of self-esteem. This component of creativity development is an essential prerequisite as well as an ongoing process. The remaining eleven steps, then, must be addressed.

All of the techniques are research based, effective and will work, if applied consistently.

Twelve steps to creativity

1. Foster a positive self-image. A vital correlate of creative thinking is a positive self-esteem (Rogers, 1962; Maslow, 1968; Kurtines, 1989; Davis & Williams, 1992; Davis, 1998). Children who feel inferior will refrain from expressing creative ideas, much less even thinking such thoughts. They must feel confident and optimistic about their thoughts. However, praising every task they propose is not the panacea. Although children must experience some success on a regular basis, they also must realize that all tasks will not be successful. It is also critical they be aware that love and respect are not contingent on the outcome of a task. Children in their formative years will closely monitor reactions of the significant caregiver to draw conclusions. Your reactions may facilitate or stifle future performance. Creative behavior requires courageous risk-taking. If a child feels overwhelmingly threatened, the child will not venture from the safe and secure world. Without a positive self-image, all the creativity-training techniques in the world will not succeed in fostering creativity. Because a positive self-image is vital to creative thinking and subsequent creative expression the caregiver must make every effort to elevate and maintain that positive view (Rogers, 1962); (Maslow, 1968); (Torrance, 1962); (Kurtines, 1989); (Davis, 1998).

2. Provide a wealth of diverse knowledge. It is not sufficient for the individual to be knowledgeable only in his area. Rather, the individual must have a wide range of knowledge available (Piaget, 1973); (Moyer, 1975). From this broad base of knowledge, the individual can better see relationships, and causality. Therefore, make a variety of information accessible. Begin by presenting traditional literature, but expand horizons by incorporating new topics. Introduce novelty – rocketry, gardening, geography, cultural diversity, sports, famous people, dance, death, mystery, drama, poetry, history, current events, and on and on. Let your imagination be your guide. Perhaps the new topic will stimulate interest and inspire future investigation. Once interest is sparked, develop the topic. If a picture book of exotic plants whets the appetite, expand. Introduce non-fiction plant books as well as fictional stories involving plants. Incorporate a bit of poetry or perhaps a play. Plant seeds, visit a nursery, bring some plants, invite an amateur gardener, paint or draw pictures of plants, mold clay into plants, dissect a plant, even eat some plants. All of these procedures will inform the child, address varying learning modalities, and present new avenues of interest. Through such diversity, the child will appreciate integrating new knowledge into existing knowledge (Piaget, 1952), and approach plants from a broader perspective. Beyond the world of books, there are exciting items to explore, investigate and from which to learn. Mom's baking supplies, Dad's tools, baby's toys, sister's make-up, and brother's sports equipment all provide exciting vehicles for learning.

3. Encourage emotional sensitivity while serving as a role model. Since emotional awareness is a characteristic of the creative individual (Davis & Rimm, 1998), provide opportunities for reinforcing development of this characteristic. Support children's empathy toward each other. They can appreciate an emotion from another's perspective as they vicariously experience the reactions. Thus, they refine ability to express these emotions using alternative vehicles, such as art, movement, or song. If a child is trying to paint a joyful scene, the child must be fully attuned to the components of joy by having experienced it first hand or vicariously. And because emotions involve differing cerebral hemispheres, both hemispheres benefit from stimulation simultaneously (Ornstein, 1997). Additionally, the primary caregiver further validates reacting to an emotion by being a positive role model.

4. Provide both group and private space exploration. Opportunity for exploration and experimentation in group as well as independent settings is essential. In 1972, Piaget spoke at a symposium on creativity at which he presented the need for group as well as private investigation and exploration in order to create (Piaget, 1972). Playing with an object either with a group or alone, allows the children to discover, rediscover, and formulate hypotheses. In group settings, children stimulate each other, share observations, draw conclusions, and use each other as building blocks from which to compose there own unique ideas. Additionally, children are developing self-confidence in expressing independent thoughts amidst the security of friends. Isolated settings afford the opportunity to test ideas, theorize, and draw personal conclusions. Exposure in both types of settings enables children to formulate independently owned conclusions based on both personal interpretations as well as observations of others. Experiencing both settings complements creative thought.

5. Expose children to convergent and divergent activities. Research has found that exposure to both types of activities is essential to creativity (Sternberg, 1995). In convergent activities, a single "correct" response exists as in assembling a puzzle or playing a board game. Divergent activities are not restrictive to solitary answers, such as building with blocks or molding clay. Children need both types of activities in order to investigate multiple possibilities but to eventually focus on a single best solution. Even adults occasionally have difficulty achieving project closure as a result of insufficient practice. Their projects diverge in many directions, but remain incomplete for lack of the ability to focus on a single route. It is essential to experience both convergent and divergent activities, if an outcome is to result.

6. Provide opportunities to make choices, especially from a range of materials. Offering a variety of materials, tools, and even activities to choose from, you force the child to weigh pros and cons of each. This further enables the child to better formulate and organize ideas in his plan. The child will select that which best complements the mood, goals, and current mode of thinking. Making choices should encompass numerous parameters, from materials, playmates, activities, to the mood of the activity. Offering choices allows children to feel that they have some control in the matter, a necessary component of self-actualizing. Further, providing a gamut of materials to choose from encourages exploration and experimentation, but also forces the child to focus on a single vehicle to complete the project. This would reinforce the benefit of transition from divergent to convergent exposure.

7. Offer adversarial observations and advice. An adversarial comment or challenge can provide a needed stimulant to organizing the plan (Piaget, 1972). As children work on projects, freely ask questions or challenge choices in a positive, constructive manner. "A purple sun ... how colorful, but could you tell me why the sun turned purple?" Give children the opportunity to explain. This will enable children to further formulate their creative thought and validate the merit of their choice. Avoid being too fast with a superficial "that's nice." Children can spot polite indifference quickly. Constructive comments may be used as potential modifiers, or may be rejected, if undesired (Davis, 1998; Sloane, 1998).

8. Provide opportunities for open-ended thinking. Brainstorming, problem solving, hypothesizing, and integrating unlikely relationships all serve to stretch the brain (Torrance, 1981; Davis, 1998; Sloane, 1992). Such activities force children to integrate past experiences with new experiences and imagine and predict outcomes. Use real-life situations within the classroom as starters. A vested interest will insure motivation. Johnny forgot his lunch; it is raining at playtime; we have no orange paint, etc. Progress to more complex situations involving relating unlikely partners or uses. An old stand-by involves having children supply new endings to familiar stories or insert new characters or new settings. Although this is a common format, the children enjoy manipulating that which is very familiar and non-threatening. Practice on a regular basis so that relating uncommon elements becomes routine. The more the brain is forced to imagine, the easier it gets and the more natural becomes the process. Be tolerant, non-judgmental and positive toward suggestions. Tally suggestions, encouraging fluency and flexibility of response and to stimulate expansion (Torrance, 1962; Sloane, 1998). Discuss the pros and cons of suggestions, but always in a constructive way. Be sure to implement some of the suggestions. (Who wants to suggest, if no one listens?) Frequent discarding of suggestions will result in less involvement.

9. **Avoid or buffer time constraints.** Time is the enemy of creative thought. If a child is exercising creative talent and is dealt with a harsh "time to stop," the result can be devastating. Perhaps the child is on the verge of closure with a project or an idea is about to peak. Having to stop suddenly may result in loss of the entire thought process, the motivation, and the subsequent conclusion. A preferred technique would be to offer subtle warnings. A gentle, "Five more minutes," followed by, "It's almost time" concluded by, "We must begin cleaning up," would allow children to anticipate closure and begin shutting down. All previous efforts wouldn't be lost. Soft bell-ringing, music playing, song singing all serve to buffer the ending. An alternate plan would be to designate a spot for saving incomplete projects until time permits completion. Whatever the project might be, the child would feel that some control over life is still possible and that the project is salvageable.

10. **Add more humor to the day.** Humor has been found to be correlated with creativity (Ornstein, 1997; Davis, 1998). A witty mind is a creative, imaginative thinker. The addition of humor might entail sharing and laughing at children's jokes, telling silly stories, or even laughing at one's own mistakes. When mistakes or accidents occur, turn the disaster into a lesson with some laughter. Spilled paint can result in an interesting abstract painting. Daily doses of humor through jokes, riddles, rhymes, or real life episodes have proven to be physically and mentally beneficial. (Freud, 1975; Rothenberg & Hausman, 1975). Someone's milk has been spilled for the zillionth time. Instead of raising your own blood pressure and making your child feel like a clumsy oaf, use some wit to respond and reinforce tolerance for accidents. Your behavior serves as a model for others proving that mistakes are acceptable and humor can make it acceptable. Once again the world becomes a safe place to take risks, and risk-taking is a necessary component of creativity.

11. **Educate those around you.** An additional component to fostering creativity involves educating those around you. Creativity can be a tricky dish for the uninformed. Various aspects of the process may need explanation. In some situations more explanation may be required than in others. It is important that those around you be informed of the goals at hand so that they may reinforce the same objectives. Those who expect the usual and ordinary often are uncomfortable and confused with presentations of creative expression. By making them aware of the guidelines and parameters established, you may ease the transition from convergent obsession to divergence in thinking. Demonstrating appropriate, tolerant reactions you become the role model for liberal interpretations and appreciation for adding spice to life. Using opportunities for class meetings, sending literature home, offering suggested reading lists, and offering positive reactions to novelty and change will be most beneficial.

12. **Be willing to change**. The ultimate goal in fostering creative thinking in our children may actually require a bit of modification on your part. Consider the changes you might make to foster creative thinking within you. Begin by conditioning yourself to think creatively in all you do. Become consciously aware of this new and resolved perspective. A push toward renewed self-awareness may be required:

(a) Begin by developing a positive attitude. Do something each day that makes you feel successful and satisfied, whether its conducting a great lesson, preparing a terrific dinner or just getting the household off on time. Find a positive in yourself so that you can share that positive with the children. Be proud of your own accomplishments and soon you will find yourself becoming a self-confident risk-taker.

(b) Begin to make yourself more knowledgeable. Don't restrict yourself to your professional field. Broaden your own horizons. Begin learning about new things by exposing yourself to new and novel experiences, things you've never tried before. Pick up a book or magazine you have never touched before, and peruse it. Investigate a new field. Grow, learn, and develop and the children will do likewise.

(c) Increase your own empathy by being sensitive to others and letting your feelings show. Try to feel what another feels so that you can genuinely express those feelings in your own ideas.

(d) Arrange for thinking and puttering time and space. Seek out your own special corner or room (maybe even a closet) and let it be especially yours where you can investigate your own interests, your own projects or display your treasures as you please. Then schedule a portion of time to do it, even if it's only on Saturday mornings before everyone is up.

(e) Force some open-ended thinking upon yourself. If you run out of something, don't call a neighbor or rush to the store. Force yourself to be resourceful.

(f) Set up adversarial respondents. When you are sharing something you purchased, made, or just thought about, ask for another's opinion. Take their opinion into consideration. Perhaps portions of their ideas may fit into your scheme of things.

(g) Buffer your own schedule. Set timers or clocks to avoid racing out the door in frenzy or bringing projects to a screeching halt.

(h) Convergent and divergent thinking are already a part of your life so you needn't bother reinforcing those. Adult life is taking care of that for you.

(i) Most importantly, keep an open mind toward unusual (non-harmful) actions, products, or occurrences and monitor your reactions. Remember you are a mirror to foster creativity in the children. A "do as I say, not as I do" approach is quite transparent to children and their own motivation will lessen.

Conclusions and implications

Implementing the above suggestions will foster confident, tolerant, imaginative, flexible, creative individuals. Furthermore, as the students' role model, you too will be demonstrating and benefiting from these approaches. You will better be able to demonstrate the creative perspective. The more creative your class becomes in their thinking, the more they derive from the curriculum and from life. Creativity is an essential process, which you, as an educator, have an obligation to foster.

In 1904, a German educator by the name of W. Rein summed up the tasks involved in creative thinking. "You cannot become a painter, poet, or musician merely by reading books on painting, poetry or music or by simply trying it. Two things are necessary: creative potential on the one hand (as assured by positive self-esteem), and schooling which takes creativity seriously, on the other." (using the proposed techniques).

We need to ready the bodies and minds of our students (and ourselves) to think liberally. Then we need to provide the opportunity to test one's wings. The resultant personality profile will typify the creative individual (as described by Paul Torrance).

The time for change is upon us. We must do our utmost to foster the creative process in our children.

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CHILDREN OUR CONCERN

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Including Young Children with Special Needs in Early Childhood Programs: Where is Florida Headed?

For most families throughout the nation, accessing and affording quality child care is a significant issue and one that dramatically influences the economics and quality of life for all family members. Much has been written about the three-fold problems of child care: availability, affordability, and quality (Florida Children's Forum, 1999; Neugebauer, 1998; Scarr and Eisenberg, 1993). For families of a child with disabilities these challenges can be particularly significant, since the needs of their child often place additional barriers (perceived and real) to accessing necessary and appropriate services (Mackey-Andrews, September, 1998).

What is inclusive child care?

Inclusive child care is defined as the child care center or family child care home the child would normally attend if that child did not have a disability. The term inclusion is often referred to as mainstreaming or integration, but each of these words may have a different connotation, depending on the speaker.

For children with disabilities, inclusive child care means utilizing the same child care services and settings as children without disabilities, participating in the same activities, being part of the group, and developing friends. Most importantly, it means having the option to use the same services in the community that all other children use instead of being isolated in a world where there are only children with disabilities.

What does the law say?

The law which has probably provided the greatest impetus for including children with disabilities in child care centers and family child care homes is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This federal civil rights law was passed in 1990. The Act states that people with disabilities are entitled to equal rights in employment, services, and public accommodations such as preschools, child care centers, and family child care homes (Rab and Wood, 1995). Many accommodations need not be difficult or expensive. For more information contact the Child Care Law Center, 973 Market Street, Suite 550, San Francisco, CA, 94103; phone: 415-495-5498; fax: 415-495-6734; e-mail: info@childcare law.com; and web site: http://childcarelaw.com.

The forerunner for inclusion in child care has been special education and early intervention legislation. The major emphasis of each law is to provide services to the child in the "least restrictive" or "natural" environment. Since 1975, federal law (P.L. 94-142) has required that children with disabilities be provided a free and appropriate public education and that services specified in the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) be provided in the "least restrictive environment." While states had the option of serving children under the age of five through P.L. 94-142, few elected to do so.

Through the passage of P.L. 99-457 in 1986, services to children under age five were encouraged nationally through major amendments to the federal statute and regulations. All states, under this new legislation called IDEA or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, were required to provide services at no cost to eligible children, ages 3 to 5. A voluntary program (originally Part H of the 1986 legislation) known currently as Part C of IDEA, encouraged states through incentive funds to establish coordinated systems of services for infants and toddlers and their families. Principles under this voluntary legislation included provisions to serve children at risk as well as those with diagnosed disabilities and medical conditions likely to cause or contribute to developmental delay. Individual state eligibility criteria vary widely. Part C has also required that services to eligible infants and toddlers and their families be provided in natural environments, and that the family serves as the center for the planning, delivery and evaluation of early intervention services.

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The 1997 amendments to IDEA through P.L. 105-17 served to reinforce the existing requirement for natural environments by adding the requirement that documentation in the Family Support Plan must appear when any service is **not** being provided in the natural environment of the child and family. Natural environment, as used in this context, is not only the location of services – but the approach and manner in which services are provided, supporting a greater emphasis upon family-directed services designed to enhance their capacity to respond to the developmental needs of their child.

Part C of IDEA states that "to the maximum extent appropriate, [early intervention services] are provided in natural environments, including the home, and community settings in which children without disabilities participate; and the provision of early intervention services for any infant or toddler occurs in a setting other than a natural environment only when early intervention cannot be achieved satisfactorily for the infant or toddler in a natural environment." Determining the natural environment for each child involves considering the unique needs, priorities and resources of the child and family.

As such, child care centers including family child care homes, are often the most natural environment for the infant or toddler. Families are encouraged to identify the provider within their community that they would be most likely to use. It is then the responsibility of the Part C system within each state to assist that setting to respond to the special needs of the child and participate in the delivery of services, together with the family, using the natural routines, activities and schedules of the family and child.

Is there a lack of inclusive child care in Florida?

In April, 1999, the Florida Children's Forum published a report entitled "Charting the Progress of Child Care in Florida – County by County." On average, for every slot in a child care center or family child care home, there are two children under age five. While these numbers vary somewhat county by county, no county was without a waiting list for typically developing children.

There is no data available in Florida to determine the number of children with disabilities or special health care needs that are being served in neighborhood child care centers or family child care homes. In 1997, an attempt was made by the Florida Children's Forum to add a question to their market rate survey to determine the number of children with disabilities being served. There were 16,000 surveys distributed with 11,848 respondents, a 69% return. Twenty-six per cent, or 4,505 of the programs, reported that they served or had the capacity to serve at least one child with a disability in their program. Out of the 275,000 children in child care represented in this sample, 8,896 were reported to have a disability. This number is deceiving, however, because of the confusion of the respondents as to who exactly was the child with the disability or special need. Many center directors either over or under-reported these numbers. A new survey is being pilot-tested which we hope will yield more accurate information.

In spite of the lack of empirical data, the frustration of parents of children with disabilities trying to find quality inclusive child care has been heard (Mackey-Andrews, October, 1998). While a great deal of attention has been given to the lack of quality child care for children who are typically developing (Collins, 1997; Collins, 1996; Dicker & Schall, 1996; Kisler & Ross, 1997), this same attention has not been focused on child care for children with disabilities or developmental delays. In fact, most people in our state do not even realize that there is a lack of inclusive child care for children with disabilities of all ages.

What are the reasons for this lack of inclusive child care?

There are many reasons for this lack of options for inclusion. One is a lack of training and technical assistance around inclusion issues for child care personnel. Many caregivers are concerned that they don't have the skills or specialized equipment that might be needed for a child with special needs (Bruder, 1998; Gold, Liepack, Scott, & Benjamin-

Wise, 1998; Peck, Carlson, and Helmstetter, 1992). Caregivers are also worried that they won't be able to meet the instructional and developmental needs of young children with disabilities (Hanline & Daley, 1999). They are concerned that having a child with a disability will require so much of their time that they will neglect the other children. And teachers report they don't have enough planning time to successfully include children with special needs (Scruggs & Mastropeiri, 1996).

A second reason for the lack of inclusion lies in the concerns voiced by many parents. Parents of children with disabilities wonder if their child will receive all the attention needed. (Guralnick,1994; Green and Stoneman, 1989). They worry about specialized services their child needs and whether such services, including speech, occupational and physical therapy, will be delivered in a child care center. Goldberg (1992), in fact, says that parents' difficulties obtaining needed specialty services are more stressful than their children's disabilities.

Parents of children without disabilities also worry that their children will not receive the time and attention they require (Peck et al., 1992). There is also the concern that their children will learn bad habits from those with disabilities. However, research does not bear this out (Hanline & Daley, 1999).

A third reason for the lack of inclusion is the attitude and comfort level of adults regarding people with disabilities (Eiserman, Shisler and Healey, 1995). Positive attitudes toward persons with disabilities are essential to successful inclusion. The severity of a disability can also affect the quality of inclusion. Buysee, Wesley, Keyes & Bailey (1996) report significant differences in teachers' comfort levels as a function of the level of the child's disability.

All of these factors, together with the scarcity of quality child care services in general, combine to force many families of children with disabilities or developmental delay into poverty and unemployment because they are unable to find care for their child during their working hours (Craig & Haggart, 1994).

A series of provider and parent forums conducted in the summer of 1998 regarding inclusive child care confirmed many of these barriers and produced the following disturbing data. In the provider forums, training was cited as the paramount need, followed by on-site consultation for specific children, and funding for additional personnel. In addition, providers did not realize there were children with disabilities in their community needing child care. This latter finding was particularly disturbing because providers reported not "seeing" children with disabilities within the community in general–reinforcing the observation that families with children with special needs are generally isolated from their own peers, community services, and activities.

Of the families participating in the parent forums, 75% of families were unable to work due to the lack of child care for their child with a disability. For the same reason, 21% were working in jobs that were part-time, seasonal or well below their training and ability (Mackey-Andrews, 1998).

While much has been written about the concerns around inclusion, there is also well-defined literature on its benefits. One of the most often cited positive aspects of inclusion for children without disabilities is the social/emotional benefit. These include friendships developed between children with and without disabilities and a sense of awareness and sensitivity to the needs of other children (Gellens, 1996; Peck et al., 1992). Benefits for children with disabilities include all of the above as well as increases in academic and developmental skills and learning age-appropriate behavior from watching their peers (Bennett, Deluca, and Bruns, 1997).

Child care staff at inclusive settings report increased comfort with human differences, increased acceptance of people as individuals, and awareness of access and inclusion issues (Hanline, 1985). Benefits to the early education and child care program may include increased recognition for their efforts such as certificates of participation in training, being listed in brochures, mention in newspaper articles and the satisfaction of knowing that they are serving all children and families equally.

Organizations such as the NAEYC and Division of Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children have published position papers on the value of inclusion. A Philosophy Statement written by the Florida Department of Education in 1994 recognizes that, "Inclusion is not a quick fix, but rather a long and considered process of change."

Ted Granger receives the Public Policy Award from Donna Shreve.

Right: Amy Cordray stands by the logo in the Exhibit Hall.

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OUR CONCERN
Today's Children • Tomorrow's Future

Below: Rhudine Poole raps about her life.

Above: Maryann "Mar." Harman's Kids on Key sing at the members' luncheon.

North Pinellas and South Pinellas unite to form PECA.

ECA of FL honors Mary Bryant.

Donna Shreve, right, introduces our new lobbyist, Linda Vaughn.

Above: Mark Ginsberg, NAEYC Executive Director, greets everyone.

Left: President Amy Cordray cuts the ribbon to open the exhibit hall as Pam Nash, Janice Sean, and Charlotte Seltzer look on.

Below: Dancing at the Great Party Bash: Sandy Crawford, conference attendee, Beverly Oglesby and Joyce Davoll.

1999 Conference Committee smiling because it is over!.

What is being done in Florida?

Florida has already begun to undertake activities to build the capacity of child care providers to care for children with disabilities and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) has taken the lead in some of these activities. For example, an introduction to children with disabilities and inclusion is included in the 30-hour (soon to be 40-hour) training for child care providers. In addition, an enhanced special needs rate is available to child care centers and family child care homes who accept children with diagnosed disabilities in subsidized care. DCF continues to work on funding issues.

Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) legislation recently passed in Florida had some important elements regarding child care and children with disabilities. For example, it is now state policy to facilitate serving children with disabilities, and the DCF provides technical assistance through the Child Care Forum. In addition, child care center owners and operators must take training in serving children with disabilities within five years of assuming their position.

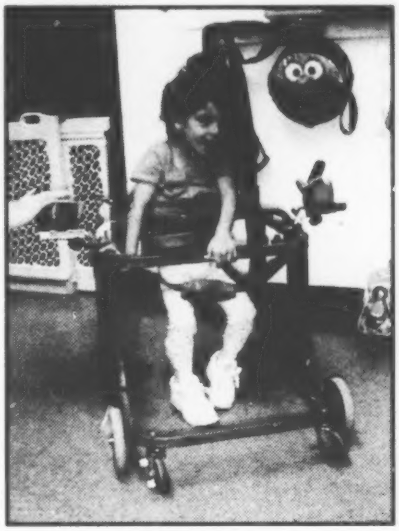
During the summer of 1998, a strategic planning process was conducted which brought many key players at the state and local levels together to determine where Florida was and what we needed to do in order to develop a plan for building inclusion in Florida. Over fifty people met for four, 2-day sessions to develop a written document detailing their vision of inclusion for Florida's children with disabilities. Some of the strategies entail more collaboration at the local and state level. Some of these strategies entail better utilization of existing resources and funding; some of them focus on building the basic quality of child care for ALL children; and some require training and technical assistance for child care providers (Mackey-Andrews, 1998).

As a direct result of this planning process, two significant things were immediately accomplished. One was that Florida submitted and was awarded a prestigious Map to Inclusive Child Care grant. We were chosen as one of ten states to participate in a federal initiative funded by the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families. This grant will provide us with the opportunity to assemble a team of stakeholders who, with technical support, will determine their own strategic goals and priorities. These goals might be in the area of legislation, staff development, regulatory practices, interagency collaboration, or others. A group of fifteen individuals participated in a National Institute on Inclusive Child Care in Washington, D.C.

The second outcome from this work group was the initiation of three inclusion pilot projects. The Department of Children and Families and The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council have collaborated in funding these pilot projects for inclusion of children with disabilities into child care. The projects are very different in each community. In Clay County, the emphasis is on preparing the community and the providers for inclusion by intensive training and creating community awareness. In Miami-Dade County, the training that is imperative before quality inclusion can take place has already been started (Gold, Liepack, Scott & Benjamin-Wise, 1999). Therefore, the emphasis in that community is on supports needed for specific providers such as, but not limited to, adaptive equipment, supplies, staff assistance, or minor physical modification of construction. Broward County is concentrating on inclusion in before and after-school care.

Implementation of the strategic plan recommendations is anticipated to continue under the guidance of a coordinator hired by the Florida Children's Forum to facilitate buy-in and action by the state agencies and other local and state business and parent leaders.

With the conclusion of the 1999 Legislative Session, Florida began several new initiatives that will greatly enhance the child care industry's ability to include children with disabilities. First, a new observational and developmental assessment program was adopted. This initiative will offer a three-phase process for identifying children with potential disabilities and delays, informing parents, and referring the children to critical interventions. Second, a regional system of technical assistance for serving children with disabilities was established. This system will offer on-line, telephone, and on-site technical assistance to child care providers on topics such as adapting the environment for serving children with disabilities, and where to obtain additional training and related services. Third, language was approved providing clear authority for the establishment of a special needs rate for children with disabilities. Finally, a new program to provide supervised care for older children, ages 13 through 17 with disabilities, was created.



Special Instruction Consultants - A Well-Kept Secret

The Special Instruction Consultant Service is a service that is provided in typical child care settings by individuals with expertise in the area of special instruction and curriculum development for infants and toddlers with special needs. This service is funded by Children's Medical Services/Early Intervention Program for infants and toddlers who are eligible for Part C and for whom this service has been authorized through the Family Support Plan (FSP) process. Unfortunately, this "well-kept secret" is under-utilized in Florida. Special instruction consultants may provide information to the child care provider in the areas of designing learning environments, activities that promote the child's acquisition of skills, curriculum planning, and achieving the outcomes in the child's FSP. This service is intended to be provided in those situations when the family chooses to have their child cared for in a typical child care setting and the child care agency needs support and information.

What Still Needs to Be Done?

It should be apparent that Florida is committed to increasing the opportunities for inclusive child care. However, we have a long way to go. We need to build awareness across the state of the need for inclusion, the resources available, and the advantages for all families. There must be a strong foundation of quality child care, for all children, and especially for children with disabilities. This includes adequate ratios, developmentally appropriate practices, and training and technical assistance to child care providers so they are comfortable and capable of responding to the particular needs of children with disabilities. There must be greater collaboration at the state and local levels, so that inclusion of children with disabilities is a joint goal of the child care and disability communities, and they both participate in Individual and Family Support Plans meetings. All existing resources must be re-examined and used to their fullest extent possible. We also need dedicated funding for those additional child care costs required to serve some children with disabilities that are not covered through existing resources.

Now is the time to get involved. With the passage of the school readiness legislation, communities are now involved in developing local coalitions in order to serve young children. Make your voice heard in advocating for quality inclusion programs in your community.

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LISTEN to the children

LISTEN ... to what children say!
Bend down, reach out and kneel,
Take time from busy play;
Learn how they feel
About the world today.

LISTEN ... to what children say!
They laugh and chatter,
Simple games they play each day.
World problems do not matter,
The present's where they stay.

LISTEN ... to what children say!
They love and share their promise
in a timely way;
They seem to show no care
for where their heads they lay.

LISTEN ... to what children say!
Deep down inside and out of sight,
A voice, from far away, says:
"All's not right for those
with whom they stay."

LISTEN ... to what children say!
With glisten in their eyes.
They make believe their play;
No person to despise,
No poison, no decay.

LISTEN ... to what children say!
Bend down, reach out and kneel.
Time out from busy play;
Learn how they REALLY feel..
About the world today.

Jim Powell, Ed.D., Consultant, Kaplan Companies, Opp, Alabama.

Everyone Included!

Is there inclusion in your future?

Get ready, get set, Go! That's what two projects in Florida are working on to promote the inclusion of young children with disabilities into programs with children who are typically developing. These programs include child care, after school care and early childhood.

Through participation in two projects, one federal and one initiated by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Florida is taking active steps to make this inclusion a readily available option for children with disabilities.

The Florida Children's Forum administers the federal project, Map to Inclusive Childcare, as well as the project funded by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Florida Inclusive Child Care Project.

The Florida Inclusive Child Care Project has three key objectives:

- to create buy-in of the concept and philosophy of inclusion by local, state and governmental leaders, as well as business and parent organizations;
- to establish groups that will be responsible for the implementation of the Strategic Plan developed through the Project; and,
- to implement at a minimum four strategies of the key recommendations of the Strategic Plan:
  - ✓ awareness,
  - ✓ quality,
  - ✓ collaboration/accountability and
  - ✓ funding.

Data for this project was gathered through a child care provider survey regarding children in inclusive settings. The data will be analyzed and the information will help the Inclusion Advisory Council, which has been established through this Project, to focus on the types of training and technical assistance child care providers may need in order to include children with disabilities in their programs.

The Inclusion Advisory Council will meet periodically to move forward the Strategic Plan.

The MAP to Inclusive Childcare Project is a federal project in which Florida participates through a grant. Florida will receive technical assistance from MAP staff for the following activities:

- engaging in a strategic planning process
- targeting priorities, and
- creating work plans relevant to the issues in Florida's child care delivery system.

The goal of the project is that children, birth to age twelve, will have access to child care alongside their typically developing peers. Even though the Americans with Disabilities Act provides for the inclusion of children with disabilities in child care settings, it is not always easy to make it happen ... either from the parents' or the providers' perspective.

Parents may not always be aware of the options they have, and child care providers may be faced with financial constraints or lack of training in order to meet the needs of the children.

Florida's system of early care and education has not been addressing these problems in as comprehensive a way as will now be possible through these two projects. The training and technical assistance the projects offer will provide the supports communities need in order to promote joint planning, maximize the use of existing resources, and increase public awareness about inclusion.

The Florida Children's Forum administers the projects, which both promote wide involvement of community stakeholders in business, education, and early care. For more information, please contact Lou Ann Long or LeMae DeVane at 1-800-654-4440.

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by Bettianne S. Ford, Early Childhood Consultant, Gainesville, Florida.

Collaborating for Child Care in Times of Change

Truly collaborative engagement and change must take place to ensure all children have conditions enabling them to be ready to learn.

Introduction

"Collaboration" has been the buzzword of the late 90's. Now it is a mandated reality in Florida. It is a concept born both from necessity due to the decreasing resources for early care and education as well as from growing awareness that no agency, institution, or person is strong enough to make progress for better conditions for children alone, in isolation from the network of others committed to caring for children. The School Readiness bill passed in Florida's 1999 legislative session creates new state and county collaborative networks of business, community, and civic leaders. This collaborative network must now engage with early education and child care providers to design plans to ensure every young child arrives at the public school door "ready to learn," the phrase from the Goals 2000 first and most important goal which still hangs as a needed but as-yet-unattainable principle.

Newest work on collaboration ranges widely, depending on whether researchers examine it from an *external* or *internal* focus. Externally, recent research (Webb, 1997; Gaines, 1997; Goeke, 1995) analyzes how collaboration between traditionally widely-divergent agencies or institutions can prove productive and utilize funding more effectively. Florida's School Readiness networks will produce external change all across the state over the next two years as collaboration ensues.

The internal focus of collaboration examines how the collaboration process influences the ideas, values and commitments of each partner. This approach is well illustrated by Jones and Nommi (1999) in their recent article devoted to the exploration of the internal focus, articulating how each was changed through the process of developing a working relationship. Each brings knowledge, skills and an orientation to service to the table. Then work at the table engages and changes participants, expanding understanding and widening directions for service and action.

True collaboration takes time, commitment and on-going continuous problem-solving communication/negotiation as people and groups find ways to work for common goals and mutually beneficial ends. This article reviews the progress made in Southwest Florida as the opening of a new university presented the possibility of new child care/higher education collaboration. Early efforts made in the pre-university period from 1993-97 to build communication between the child care community and higher education are examined as the necessary precursor to successful collaboration. This was followed by activities during the first years of the university's operations in three domains: in child care, in the university, and in joint collaboration with others delivering services for young children. Finally, this article examines some of the potent possibilities as well as pitfalls when collaboration is attempted, especially during times of change. This is most relevant to Florida today as school readiness mandates are implemented across the state.

Initial efforts to establish collaboration

In January 1991 Florida's Board of Regents recommended a new university for Southwest Florida, and Governor Lawton Chiles authorized plans to open the institution in August 1997. This action was taken after much lobbying by Southwest Florida community leaders who saw the needs of fast-growing areas best served by an independent, vital and dynamic facility providing higher education to the five counties in the region: Charlotte, Lee,

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Collier, Glades, and Hendry. This early activism set the stage for collaboration since conception of the new institution.

Between the time when the first employee of Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) was hired – President Roy McTarnaghan in April 1993 – and opening day in August 1997, concerted efforts were made by university employees and community leaders to establish linkages and build community-university communication. For the child care community this meant meeting with newly-arriving university administrators and faculty, participation in search-and-screen hiring committees, and – most of all – engaging in dialogue about the establishment of the university's child care facility. In 1994 a community committee was formed under Marci Greene, then a new assistant professor of Special Education at University of South Florida's Ft. Myers branch campus. This committee created a forum for those concerned about early education and care to start to "dream" about the future. They planned an all-day event in January 1995 where over 100 early childhood leaders from five counties started to work together, forming eight task forces which met over the next months to concretize dreams into a report of specific recommendations.

Marjorie Wilson of Child Care of Southwest Florida (CCSWF) remembers this pre-university-opening time as unique, saying, "The January meeting mobilized us. It is hard now to believe a soul connected with children in our five-county region missed the event. We were all there to wave, be recognized, listen to plans, meet the President and Vice-president, and participate in the eight task forces. Over the next months we all met monthly, sometimes more often. Wonderful insights emerged as people worked together. New constituents were invited when gaps were identified like rural issues, playgrounds, senior care, and school-age needs. One thing was evident: the early childhood community was beginning to speak, even if the same language sometimes had different meanings. This was the first time that we in the domains of child care, early intervention, special education, health, child welfare – and so many other areas too – came together face to face to talk about the future. It opened possibilities for collaboration we'd never had before."

Victoria Dimidjian, who was serving as an FGCU administrator prior to campus opening, captured some of the events in an article titled "Chaos Theory and Campus Child Care" (1998) which linked the paradigm provided by chaos theory to the process of developing collaboration. She notes that each new person added to the university structure adds a new element to the developing picture. "It was much like making a puzzle piece by piece rather than just having the pieces spread out on the table and a picture to help arrange them standing by. Every new person who arrived brought new ideas, strategies and visions of what could be. The drama was finding consensus and making it work!"

By the university's opening day in August 1997, there were four early childhood faculty on board (one the director of the planned child care facility) and a contingent of undergraduate and graduate students planning on working with young children. Additionally, strong, on-going communication between university faculty and the child care community had been established. One early tangible result of that process was a GOALS 2000 collaborative grant awarded to Lee County School's Early Intervention Program. Partners in grant development were from the public schools, child care, and university communities under the leadership of Dr. Elizabeth Karas, Coordinator of the Early Intervention Division which offers prekindergarten, Head Start and special education for young children. Actual collaboration was underway just as the new institution officially started!

Child Care Collaborative efforts during the university's first year

When university doors opened in August 1997 many collaborative activities were planned or underway across the university. Those in the arena of child care fell into three categories: activities where university faculty provided expertise and assistance to Child Care of Southwest Florida; activities where child care staff provided expertise and assistance to the university; and those where both parties worked with others in the community concerned about young children. Each of these will be discussed separately.

Child Care of Southwest Florida is governed by a Board of Directors, and two FGCU faculty members joined the Board in 1997. In addition to participation in monthly meetings for governance, faculty met with child care administrators about legislative and funding issues regularly. Each spring CCSWF sponsors a "Circles of Care" conference. In 1997 over 800 caregivers attended, and six FGCU faculty presented an array of workshops. In 1998 the conference attendance grew as did the university's participation. All of these activities allowed new FGCU faculty to share expertise, work cooperatively with community parents and teachers, and engage collaboratively with CCSWF.

Conversely, staff members from CCSWF also shared their expertise with the university in numerous ways. They participated in finding new faculty and hiring child care center staff. They arranged opportunities for FGCU students to observe in centers and family care homes. They engaged in discussions about curriculum revision, scheduling courses and instituting a master's degree in early childhood. In addition to direct CCSWF-FGCU collaboration, the partners also worked with other programs and agencies throughout the year on efforts to strengthen children's services.

The GOALS 2000 grant awarded to the Lee County Schools necessitated an on-going advisory board from the 5-county region, and personnel from FGCU and CCSWF served together with a dozen others under the leadership of grant directors Sheila Sierts during the first year and then Teresa Quillen for the next 1 1/2 years. Presentations about this grant and other collaborative efforts were made at the 1997 NAEYC national conference, and a team of nine early childhood leaders worked together to present the seminar "Collaboration in Times of Change" at NAEYC's Institute for Professional Development in Miami in June 1998 where much of this paper's content was showcased. Moreover, CCSWF worked collaboratively with the public schools and Redlands Christian Migrant Association in providing the required caregiver training and in provision of funded child care and intervention. University faculty were apprised of all these efforts, and they included information on this work in their classes, sometimes having agency speakers talk on campus and sometimes scheduling student observations in the field. Finally, individual FGCU faculty have been involved in working directly in agencies and schools with teachers and caregivers, providing advice, training and engaging in action research now being issued for publication.

The dynamic pattern of university-community child care partnerships has been a living reality during the first year of university operations. It has provided a synergy to the daily work of classroom teaching at the university and to caregiving in the community, one which neither side wishes to lose. But in order for that to happen, lessons from the past must be recognized and some adjustments made.

If our children enter schools ready to learn, the collaboration of all parts of the community called to the table by the new mandate must occur, each partner giving and taking and learning from others.

Lessons about collaboration

Reflecting on the successes and stresses experienced during the pre/post-university opening, three lessons about collaboration seem important to preserve.

First, collaboration takes **TIME**. Long before a grant proposal is written or a new program is begun, partners in the effort must have had opportunities to talk, exploring how their goals are similar/different, how their training and conceptual frameworks are similar/different, how their priorities are similar/different. Co-author Marjorie Wilson realized during the first two years of collaborative planning that "the words we used were the same but they had different meanings for many of us." Time to talk through each partner's frame of reference, allowing each party to communicate fully where he or she stands is essential to building true partnerships. All individuals and their respective institutions need to ensure that time is provided and that collaborative commitments are valued.

Second, collaboration takes **TRUST**. With open and full communication, it becomes possible for each party in a collaborative effort to commit to joint goals and problem-solving when difficulties arise. True collaboration means we don't have to begin at the start each time we come together. Rather, we know we are all traveling on the same ticket together.

We trust the train and the tracks that are carrying us; we just have to keep working at all being "up to speed." Formal meetings, written communications, phone calls, quick notes, and constantly checking back to be sure everyone is included: all these are shown in trust-based collaboration which is regularly re-affirmed.

Third, collaboration is a **THREE-STEP DANCE**. We collaborate with others because together we are stronger, more effective, and can provide better care for children. In every collaboration we are motivated for the reasons which will serve our own agency or institution and our place within that network. Yet we also see that others are equally motivated, and we work to balance our needs with needs of others. To do that on an on-going basis means we dance not the two-step of "what's yours, what's mine" but the three steps of "yours, mine, ours." Each partner must remember to pull back from his/her specific involvement to view the collaborative partnership as a whole. Questions to keep close include,

- Is every member participating fully, being heard and responded to equally?
- Is everyone satisfied with the outcomes, individually and collectively?
- As we grow, are there others to include? What new is happening in our community that may impact on our efforts?

Good collaboration means learning to dance the three-step refrain of "yours, mine, ours" in an ever-expanding circle! The School Readiness legislation mandates that partners who have been engaged in joint efforts like those described earlier now must broaden their efforts. All communities in the state have engaged those in academic institutions, school, and child care agencies in collaboration. Now, however, the business and civic leaders will be joining the collaborative network. Looking at some of the problems that have emerged in past collaborative efforts is crucial as the scope of the newly mandated collaboration broadens.

Problems and pitfalls in collaboration can occur, particularly if the three "preconditions" to effective collaboration cited above aren't met. Even though the new School Readiness legislation sets aside nearly two years for implementation, careful attention to time, trust, and a three-step process must be maintained. Effective collaboration isn't simply sitting through mandated meetings or spouting one's own views or protecting one's institution's turf. Truly collaborative engagement and change must take place to ensure all children have conditions enabling them to be ready to learn.

Additionally, each person engaged in collaboration must monitor and safeguard against "collaboration collapse" syndrome. Sometimes this happens if *priorities* of an agency or institution change, demanding differences in that partner's collaboration. At FGCU, for example, we have the necessity of revising our undergraduate early childhood education curriculum while designing a new free-standing master's degree. Given the scant resources and the need for community collaboration, priority was set: undergrad revision this year, graduate program next. Knowing both are badly needed, it was a hard decision to make but necessary. Sometimes *personnel* change, and collaborative partnerships will always need a time for transitioning new faces into the system. The 5 "STAR" Grant, for example, had a change in leadership over the two-year period. A two-month "getting up to speed" process was the focus for all of us, and this was helped by the fact that the grant director moved from a position at CCSWF to the new position. She'd been part of the dance before; now she just was taking another position while the music kept up the beat. Finally, there are sometimes *problems in interpersonal communication* that drain energy from the collaborative effort. Knowing whether to confront problems directly or whether to simply withstand the stress, hoping for positive change over time, is always the dilemma. At this point outside "ears to hear, eyes to see" is important. Consultants can bring new insight, sometimes opening new ways to work together. Stress in any system is to be expected; but just staying stuck in stress must be avoided for collaboration to work.

As each of Florida's counties builds a new network of collaboration during 2000, lessons about the challenges of collaboration will be apparent to all partnering in the new process. It is crucial that we monitor how we are doing, watching for the pitfalls we know are possible like those discussed above. Additionally, our new collaborations can teach us even more about change if we realize that learning from both successes and struggles is our task in this new undertaking.

Florida remains a fast-growing state, and the School Readiness legislation has been designed to bring the state and each county's constituencies together in meeting the needs of all our youngest citizens as our population expands. On Florida's Gulf Coast massive growth and change is occurring. Recently the *Ft. Myers News-Press* (2/18/99, p. 1) noted that while the overall population in the state grew by 15.9% between 1990-1998, the change in Southwest Florida was remarkably higher. Charlotte County grew by 20.4%, Lee County by 21% and Collier County by over 38%! Children, families and all our institutions must work together to accommodate such rapid change successfully. Because past collaboration in our region has been successful, four of the five counties in this region already have school readiness coalitions underway (by September 1999) and the fifth convenes soon. We suspect that in other areas of the state where strong collaborative networks already exist, implementation of the new mandate will occur cooperatively and quickly, too. But in other areas, however, the establishment of basic conditions for collaboration–time, trust, communication, a working partnership process–may make school readiness harder to achieve. This is surely fertile ground for research and study in the next year!

We who are advocates and providers of care learn from each collaborative effort we make. If our children enter schools ready to learn, the collaboration of all parts of the community called to the table by the new mandate must occur, each partner giving and taking and learning from the others. Only then will we be able to ensure that all our children have communities of stability where each young child's growth is protected and ensured. Successful collaboration each and every day can build such communities, and then our shared concern–the lives of our young children–will be strengthened and enhanced.

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Winners!

ECA of FL 1999 Conference Scholarship Winners

Judith Maynard, Charlotte AEYC
Mary Bell, ECA of Sarasota

* * *

Awards!

Membership Action Plan (MAP) Grants Awarded to:

ECA of Sarasota - funding towards Teacher Appreciation Night during Week of the Young Child 2000

Lee County AEYC - funding for Membership Meeting and Social to revive interest in affiliate.

Isn't She Potty Trained Yet?

When toilet training becomes toilet troubles

Perhaps the potty-chair arrived as a gift. Maybe the phone calls from grandma have become more frequent asking, *"Isn't she potty trained* yet?" Or maybe the child care center's clock is ticking. Your child must be toilet trained by two or she will no longer be welcome.

For so many reasons, parents are feeling the "potty training" pressure. With generations of parents wrestling with this issue, the questions have remained the same while the answers keep changing. No wonder today's parents are uncertain about how to traverse this potentially tricky developmental milestone.

Allowing children to master this complex task at their own rate makes sense. Toileting competence requires that children be physically ready to pull pants up and down. They must be psychologically able to be independent and cooperative at the same time. They must be physiologically able to control both sphincter and bladder. This is a complex process that requires time to mature. So while children are not maturing later than previous generations, we are much more aware of the small steps that children take toward success and more respectful of individual timetables. A very small percentage of children master toileting before two years of age, while many don't even begin the process until three. In fact, in a recent study reported in the January 1997 issue of *Pediatrics,* only 60% of the children were trained by three years of age and 88% by three-and-one-half. Almost half of the boys studied were not trained before three. With such a wide age span, it would seem that the pressure would be off of parents and caregivers.

Enter the nineties. The climate has changed. Parents who must rely on child care centers in order to work outside of the home are being forced to comply with arbitrary expectations for toileting competence. Other parents worry that allowing children too much freedom, in this area or any other, will result in rebellious behavior. Still others who are concerned about their children's bowel habits may misinterpret infrequent but normal elimination patterns for pathology. Pediatricians and parenting educators are hearing about toileting battles and failures in increasing numbers.

If there is one thing we have learned over the past 30 years, it is that when an adult enters into a power struggle with a toddler, the adult will lose. Holding onto the belief that WE are in control of the toileting process may just land us in the middle of one of these "no win" power struggles. We may couch our control in rewards like *M&M's,* fancy big girl pants or promises of new toys. But when WE decide a child should be trained, the battle lines are drawn. Sometimes it is not an out-and-out war but more nearly, a cold war. We threaten loss of privileges and we call names (*"Only babies wear diapers!").* We may be patient to a point but then for a variety of reasons, more and more parents are finding themselves in toileting wars that escalate to grave proportions. In 80% of death-related child abuse cases involving children between the ages of one and five, the triggering incident was a toileting issue.

Children who are pressured prematurely to comply with parental demands around toileting are more likely than others to develop "stool toileting refusal." This in turn leads to secondary problems such as stool withholding and encopresis (stool soiling). The result is often profound constipation requiring medical intervention. As a family copes with everything from enemas to toileting accidents to painful bowel movements, the stress mounts. What began as a normal developmental milestone has deteriorated into a family crisis.

How can we begin to reverse this growing trend toward toileting troubles? First we must deal with a major source of pressure for families: child care centers. Taking on child care centers will be a challenge. But demanding that children comply with arbitrary guidelines can have far reaching consequences. In Florida, too many parents are

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Dr. Robert Weiss is a pediatrician in private practice and Medical Editor of Kids' N Stuff magazine.

Diane Weiss is co-founder of Forty Carrots of Sarasota, a center for Early Childhood and Parent Education, and Director of Forty Carrots Parenting Center. She conducts professional and parent development workshops statewide. They live in Sarasota, FL.

being forced to ignore what we know about development in order to maintain their children's enrollment in child care centers and preschool programs that use toilet training as an entrance criteria. Frustrated parents have been heard to remark, "*We don't care about development. The child care center says if our children are not potty trained by two, then they are no longer welcome. Don't tell us about development. Tell us how to train our children right now!*"

Sometimes a center will not exclude a child who has failed to master toileting by a certain age, but instead will insist that the child be retained in a younger age group until this milestone has been accomplished. This kind of policy must assume that there is a correlation between successful toileting and other areas of development. Could it be that it presumes that a child who is still in diapers at three is actually not equal to his/her peers in language development, social development, fine or gross motor development? Could there be a presumption that a child who is slow to toilet train is actually less intelligent than one who is quicker to master this task? A review of the literature did not result in confirmation of such beliefs, but instead, many contradictions. So where is the justification for depriving children of their peer group because of their bathroom skills?

Still other centers actually charge more for those children who continue to wear diapers after a certain age. At first glance, there might be some merit to such a policy; after all it does require greater staff time to accommodate this child. But unless we are willing to charge more for the child whose language is slower to develop because we have to listen longer and harder, then we should not allow discrimination based on toileting development. And unless we agree to charge more for the child who continues to be shaky on the climber long past his peers because he requires greater supervision, then we cannot allow for discrimination based on bathroom techniques.

While Florida and its leading early childhood organizations are lacking a clear position statement on the issue of toileting they are not alone. The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredits early childhood programs which meet the highest standards of excellence. Yet no mention of the toileting issue is made in its accreditation guidelines. By omitting any reference to toileting, centers may receive NAEYC accreditation despite the use of toileting mastery as an entrance criterion. The strongest statement made by NAEYC on the issue can be found in a 1998 article, *Toilet Learning for Toddlers. "The fact is that the ability to control bladder and bowel functions is as individual as each child. Some two-year-olds are fully potty trained, and some are not."*

Using the *Pediatrics* study as a guide, only 4% of the nearly 500 children studied were potty trained by age two; 22% by two-and-a-half. NAEYC, along with state and local early childhood organizations, need to revisit their positions on toileting mastery. While grass roots efforts will be critical to change, they can only be successful with the endorsement of the professional associations and agencies that oversee and advise local programs.

While we are addressing the external pressures placed on families by child care centers, it is equally important to focus on toileting myths. These myths may prevent parents from embracing toileting development as a child-centered milestone that unfolds in much the same way as first words and first steps: when the child is ready! Parenting educators, early childhood educators, pediatricians, and other professionals who are in a position to counsel parents on toileting development have an opportunity to help parents take the battle out of the bathroom by offering revised beliefs.

Myth #1: We train children to use the potty hence the term "toilet training."

Revised Belief: Deborah Critzer, who edits the Positive Parenting Home Page on the Internet, writes that "potty education is ... the child's opportunity to learn and grow. Where and when the child has bowel movements is one area in which the youngster has complete power and control." We can look for signs of readiness and set the stage for success, but we cannot make a child use the toilet anymore than we can make a child walk, talk, or climb to the top of the slide. We talk about language development, social development, and motor development. It is time we stop talking about toilet training, and start talking about toileting development or toilet learning.

Myth #2: Allowing children to determine when they will transition out of diapers is a sign of permissiveness and is associated with rebellious behavior.

Revised Belief: Child-oriented toileting has not been correlated with rebellious behavior. In a study conducted by researchers from University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, children who refused to use the potty did not have more behavior problems than children who were toilet trained. Rather than being correlated with rebellious behavior, child-oriented toileting has been associated with successful toileting outcomes.

Myth #3: Children must have daily bowel movements in order to be healthy. Failure to have daily bowel movements constitutes constipation.

Revised Belief: In educating parents about differences in regularity, the pressure is off when they learn that delays between bowel movements of two to three days are not uncommon in some children. True constipation requires not only decreased bowel frequency, but also hard consistency and difficulty with passage of the stool.

Myth #4: Children's toileting development is reflective of parenting ability.

Revised Belief: Toilet competence is a developmental skill that is no more reflective of parenting ability than is a child's mastery of walking or talking. Toileting mastery is more nearly related to a combination of readiness factors, not the least of which is the child's stage of emotional development. The toddler period, traditionally touted as the optimal time for toilet learning, is in actuality a period marked by negativism and a need for control. Toileting development cannot be hastened by the use of particular parenting skills. Time and a less negative period of development are the answers. With revised beliefs in hand, professionals can help prevent many toileting battles. But what can be done if the battle lines have already been drawn and the war is well underway?

The best advice for parents already in the battle comes from findings reported in the recent *Pediatrics* article. "Declare a potty truce," was the recommended solution to stool toileting refusal problems. The parents in this study whose children were non-compliant were advised to return their children to diapers and to tell them that underpants could only be worn when they used the toilet for stools and urine. Further, the parents were asked to make no effort to train their children. Many of the parents were reluctant to do this because they considered it going backward, negating all that they had achieved and worried that it would confuse their children. However, with this approach all but a small number of the children were successfully potty trained within three months. Sometimes doing less is best. Here are a few additional tips for parents and caregivers.

- Avoid shaming and humiliation. Early childhood is characterized by a search for independence that must be balanced by a developing sense of shame and doubt. Embarrassment combined with parental disapproval increases the child's sense of doubt and shame (Erik Erikson). Shaming and humiliation may serve to compound potential medical problems with a loss of self-esteem.
- Use statements like, "You'll do it when you are ready," says Dr. Brazelton in his book *Touchpoints.* This is one more way to take the power struggle out of the process.
- Respond to the child's progress with encouragement but not fanfare. Some children will interpret an adult's cheers, calls to relatives and other excessive proclamations of toileting progress as a call to battle. If it seems too important to the adult, some children may see toileting as an opportunity to exercise their seemingly insatiable need for power and control.

So when parents find themselves in the middle of toileting battles with their little ones, suggest that they try calling a truce. For children under four years of age, it's back to diapers. And for those older than four, encourage parents to check with their pediatricians to rule out medical concerns prior to planning a strategy. One way or the other, the day will come when every parent will have the answer to grandma's question, "Isn't he potty trained yet?" "Yes, now that he's ready!"

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Southeast Region Report

October, 1999

The Broward Association for Young Children (BAYC) held a membership drive on October 13th at the Young at Art Children Museum. Over 45 people attended and enjoyed a Lakeshore exhibit and a hands on art make and take. Wine and cheese were served during the registration time. Attendees were encouraged to become more involved with the association and were invited to the next board meeting on November 3, 1999. A survey was taken during the workshop. We will forward the results to you after reviewing. The board is planning another workshop to be held early December. I have not had any contact with other Southeast affiliates since the conference. On a personal note, I wish to thank the board for the wonderful experience and I hope that in the future I can be more involved on a consistent level. Thank you.

Pam Nash
ECA of Florida
Former Southeast Regional Representative

BAYC wants to know ... What's your opinion?

1. Do you think there is more violence in the classroom today?
2. Are there more single fathers raising children in your school?
3. Are there many grandparents raising the children?
4. What TV show do you see influencing the children most?
5. What does school readiness mean to you?
6. Do you have any practical ideas to share on how to implement the current brain research in your classroom?

Please share your ideas for workshops and events with BAYC.

Call Liz Meyers, President, at 954-341-2852.

Early Childhood Association of Florida Business Meeting
Saturday, October 2, 1999 - Radisson Twin Towers, Orlando FL

Maryann "Mar." Harman and her group "Kids on Keys" sang the theme song of the conference, "Today's Children; Tomorrow's Future." President Amy Cordray called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. Lydia Neasman served as Parliamentarian. The Executive Board Members were introduced: Janice Sean, Vice-President of Organizational Development; Janet Davies, Vice-President Of Professional Development; Donna Shreve, Vice-President of Public Policy; Sister Roberta Bailey, Financial Officer; Pam Nash, Southeast Region Representative; Marguerite Orban, Central Region Representative; Blanche Turner, North Region Representative; Suzi Jamrog, Southwest Region Representative; Beverly Oglesby, SECA Representative; and Suzanne Gellens, Executive Director.

Janice Sean presented the Board's activities for the past year. President Cordray stated the minutes of the Annual Meeting of September 26, 1998 were published in *Children Our Concern*. Copies were distributed to those in attendance. Beverly Oglesby moved to approve the minutes. Betty Butler seconded. The minutes were passed. Mark Ginsberg, the Executive Director of NAEYC, was introduced along with Janie Humphries, the SECA Representative from Louisiana.

Past Presidents were recognized: Alice Taglauer (1980); Dr. Patricia Smith Spaulding (1981); Dr. Ann Levy (1982); Sheila Bollinger (1984); Dottie Ports (1987); Lydia Neasman (1988); Suzanne Gellens (1989); Beverly Oglesby (1993); Dr. Vicki Folds (1994); Gail Robertson (1995); Keith McIntyre (1996); and Nancy Fraser Williams (1998).

Suzanne Gellens reported for Sister Roberta Bailey that the financial reports have been sent to the auditor and will be on file in the office. She gave the renewal membership awards: East Pasco, first; West Pasco, second. Suzanne announced that ECA received an NAEYC MAG Grant award for a violence prevention seminar for affiliate officers in March 2000, in Gainesville, FL. Suzanne recognized the 1999 Conference Committee for their hard work: Sandy Crawford, Janet Hamstra, Liz Meyers, Mimi Hecker, Sherri Piasecki, Amy Crease, and Cynthia Poudrette.

President Cordray awarded charters to Citrus County ECA and Pinellas County ECA.

Martha Skelton, Chair of the Professional Recognition and Assistance Committee, reported on scholarship and grant opportunities. A MAP Grant was given to South Florida AEYC. Dr. Kathy Powers reported on the project. A MAP Grant was awarded to North Florida AYC. Gerry Binkley reported on the Teddy Bear Picnic. The 1999 Conference Scholarships went to Mary Bell, ECA of Sarasota and Judith Maynard, Charlotte County AEYC. Disaster Emergency Relief Funds are available.

Janet Allyn presented the results of the election for the 2000 Board of Directors: President-Elect, Janice Sean; Vice-President for Public Policy; Donna Shreve; Vice-President for Organizational Development, Mona Jackson; Southeast Region Representative, Debra Coney; and Central Region Representative, Marguerite Orban. Dottie Ports installed the officers. Amy Cordray recognized the outgoing board members: Nancy Fraser Williams, President; and Pam Nash, Southeast Regional Representative.

Nancy Fraser Williams asked regions to elect members to serve on the nominating committee. Betty Butler is Chair. Janice Sean moved to close nominations. Pam Nash seconded. Passed.

Committee :		Alternates:
North:	Mary Ann Mochan	Alva Isaac
Central:	Sheila Bollinger	Sandy Bontempo
Southeast:	Lyvonda Thomas	Tenille Sparks
Southwest:	Beth Ellis	Susan O'Carroll

Amy Cordray closed the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

Administrator Credential Creates Professional Pathway in the Field of Early Care and Education

Legislation was passed in Florida during the 1999 legislative session that will require over 6,000 administrators/directors of early care and education programs to obtain a credential as part of the minimum child care licensing standards by January 1, 2003. After January 1, 2003, directors will have to complete the credential requirements prior to being hired in a director position.

For the purposes of the credential requirement, the person who must obtain the credential is found in Chapter 402-302(10), Florida Statute. According to this statute, this person is defined as the operator of a licensed child care center–"the on-site person ultimately responsible for the overall operation of a child care facility whether or not he or she is the owner or administrator of such facility." This includes operators of school-age child care programs if they fall under the rubric of the child care licensing statute.

The legislation offers new opportunities and challenges for the field of early care and education.

New Opportunities

Early childhood administrator credentialing initiatives are rapidly developing across the country as a strategy for improving the quality of early care and education programs. Administering an early childhood program is a complex job requiring extensive skills and knowledge. Administrators of these programs are highly specialized professionals, providing a much-needed service to their communities. Therefore, the expectation that they be highly educated and credentialed is increasing.

Too often and for too long, the role of child care program director has been systematically underestimated and undervalued – salaries are low and educational expectations are minimal. The new credentialing requirement brings higher status and recognition for center administrators as professionals. And it lends credibility to the profession of early care and education.

The credentialing requirement also provides an opportunity to make coursework available that center directors and administrators have been seeking for a long time. Traditionally there has been very little coursework available that is relevant to the unique challenges of running a business such as child care. And when courses have been made available, it has often been difficult for colleges to get enough students enrolled to offer the courses.

New Challenges

While the new coursework requirement offers educational opportunities, challenges also must be met. To ensure the required coursework is available, post-secondary institutions (vocational-technical schools, community colleges, public and private colleges and universities) have been invited to develop coursework that will address competencies that have been identified as appropriate for administering a child care program. Competencies fall into three broad categories: child care, education, organizational leadership, and management; child care and education financial and legal issues; and child care and education programming. To ensure quality course offerings, a multidisciplinary team of early care and education professionals is reviewing the coursework as it is submitted.

Julie Rogers, M.S., Vice President of Professional Development, Florida Children's Forum, Tallahassee, Florida

To date, over 40 institutions have indicated their interest in offering credential coursework. Many of these institutions hope to offer one or more courses by the fall semester, 2000. Currently seven courses have been approved for the Foundational Level.

Outreach, Applications and Scholarships

Outreach

To ensure information on the credential is available to the Florida early childhood community, the Florida Children's Forum, under contract with the Department of Children and Families, is conducting outreach activities throughout the state. Introductory brochures have been mailed to every licensed child care center in Florida and workshops are being offered at major early childhood conferences. A cadre of people will be trained on the credential components and will be available to do workshops at local conferences starting in February. In addition, a more detailed brochure can be obtained now by calling the Forum Professional Development Department.

Applications

The application process for the credential will begin in the Summer, 2000. At that time, applications will be sent to all licensed centers in Florida. In addition, all licensing specialists and training coordinators will have applications and brochures.

Scholarships

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Program scholarships will be available to help administrators meet the CDA and coursework requirements of the credential based on the availability of funds.

The Bigger Professional Development Picture

The Florida Child Care and Education Program Administrator Credential is part of a larger comprehensive and coordinated statewide strategy for assisting early childhood care and education professionals. This strategy, called *Pathways to Professionalism*, is an emerging career advancement system for the early childhood care and education field in Florida. The Department of Children and Families, in collaboration with the Florida Children's Forum and the Head Start statewide initiative, Collaboration for Young Children and Their Families, will continue to strive to ensure child care and education is a viable career choice in Florida. Together we can create pathways to advancing careers in Florida's child care and education profession.

For more information on credential requirements, availability of coursework, the application process and scholarships, contact the Forum Professional Development Department toll free at 877-FL-TEACH (1-877-358-3224).

Credential requirements

- **A high school diploma or GED (including the Spanish GED)**
- **The Department of Children and Families Part I Introductory Child Care Course (the original 20-hour Introductory Child Care Course with the new requirement of 10 hours in observation and assessment)**
- **The 10-hour module *Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Children with Special Needs* or an approved equivalency**
- **A CDA, CDA equivalency, a formal education exemption (including a waiver) or an employment history recognition exemption**
- **One to three approved courses in early child care and education program administration (in some cases exceptions will be granted for persons with degrees and specified coursework)**
- **One or two years of experience in on-site child care and education program administration.**

The Book Nook

Children's Literature in Review

🕮 WHOEVER YOU ARE

By Mem Fox; Leslie Staub, Illustrator;
ages 3 – 6; excellent for beginning readers

This book uses simple language to identify how people are different and yet, in so many ways, very much the same. The differences are defined in our homes, schools, lands, lives and the words we use. We are the same with hearts, smiles, laughs, joys and pain. It brings to mind the saying that all people laugh in the same language!

The illustrations are vivid with each page illustrated within a picture frame. It helps children with the concepts of differences and sameness among people and how accepting we can be in our understanding of others.

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🕮 WHAT MOMMIES DO BEST/ WHAT DADDIES DO BEST

By Laura Numeroff; Lynn Munsinger, Illustrator; ages 3 – 6; excellent for beginning readers

This is a two-sided upside-down book. One side tells all the many things mommies do best such as ride a bike with you, bake a cake, make a garden grow, give you a piggyback ride, take care of you when you are sick, watch a sunset with you, sew a loose button on your teddy bear, hold you when you are feeling sad, read you a story and many other things but best of all she can give you lots of love.

Now you are half way through the book, but to continue you must turn the book upside down and turn the back to the front. Now the story is about daddies and what they do best. It is interesting to note when the child realizes that the daddies do all the same things that mommies do best. A pleasurable surprise!

The illustrator uses many different animals throughout the book, which brings out the concept that all types of people are capable of doing these things best!

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🕮 JACK By Rebecca Elger; ages 2 – 4

A series of lift-the-flap and pull-the-tab books. Available in the following titles: "It's a Rainy Day" and "It's a Sunny Day." Jack is a lovable dog experiencing weather. Text is written in large and simple print. Tabs and flaps are sturdy and provide action and surprises. Children will be able to repeat the story and sequence quickly. This is a set of fun books to enjoy with young children.

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🕮 TIGER and the TEMPER TANTRUM TIGER and the NEW BABY

By Vivian French and Rebecca Elger;
ages: 2 – 4

This is a set of books that deals with some real issues in the lives of early learners. Children relate to the feelings experienced by Tiger. Saying "NO" to everything mother Tiger suggests finally erupts into a full-blown tantrum. With the help of some animal friends, he finally realizes that cooperation is the key to success.

Dealing with a new baby in the house brings some insecurity to Tiger. When the adults allow him to play with the baby's toys and help him realize that he will always be bigger than his little sister, he begins to accept her. The tactics used in this book may help parents in assisting their child to cope with a new baby.

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🕮 TELL ME SOMETHING HAPPY BEFORE I GO TO SLEEP

By Joyce Dunbar and Debi Gliori;
ages 3 – 6

Willa, a small stuffed bunny, shares bunk beds with her older brother, Willoughby. Willa is unable to sleep because she is afraid she might have a

by Dolores Burghard, Director, Creative School for Children, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

bad dream. Willoughby tells her to think of something happy. When she cannot think of anything happy, her brother begins to help her see that all her familiar things will be waiting for her in the morning and these are happy thoughts for her.

Children finding it difficult to go to sleep at night may gain some help from this story. The illustrations give a warm and cuddly feeling.

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SILLY SALLY
By Audrey Wood;
ages 2 – 6
Excellent for
beginning readers

A delightful rhyme and recall sequence book. Silly Sally is on her way to town, backwards and upside down. She meets several different animals on the way and they do rhyming things together with Sally always backwards and upside down. Neddy Buttercup comes along walking forward and right side up. In recall sequence order, he tickles the animals that Sally met on her way to town. There is a surprise ending. Who wins out? Sally walking backwards, upside down or Neddy Buttercup walking forward and right side up?????? A silly story but fun for children to learn to chant and practice recall sequencing. Sometimes it tickles our funny bone to be silly!

Did You Know ?

Bacteria, protozoa, viruses, parasites, or fungi are all forms of microorganisms or what most of us call "germs." I tell my students in my program, "If you got children, you got spills." Well, "If you got children, you got germs." The diseases and infections that germs cause are the number one reason for absenteeism among the children and staff in a program.

The five major categories of germs are:

Viruses: colds, flu, measles, mumps, chicken pox.
Bacteria: sore throat, strep, staph.
Parasites: pin worms, tape worms, hook worms.
Fungi : athletes foot, ring worm (not really a worm), thrush.
Protozoa: malaria, dysentery.

Viruses are the most common germs, especially in the winter months when we are exposed to more people in enclosed places. Viruses must run their course; they can not be cured by antibiotics. Over-the-counter medication will help to mask the symptoms until we feel better.

Hand washing for you and your children continues to be the number one most important single way to prevent the spread of infection. It is not required by the State but I strongly support the use of gloves for all diaper changing. The nursing field caught on to gloves years ago. They say, "If it's wet, sticky and not yours, USE GLOVES."

In addition, the consistent daily sanitation of toys and equipment is a must. Don't forget those two germ-covered items: door knobs and phones.

I've had people who work with school-aged children say that their children should know better, that it is not their job to make sure children wash their hands. The rules and regulations state all children have to wash their hands. That child who should know better just used the bathroom, didn't wash their hands, and because they love you so much they just came up and gave you a great big hug!

✂ Cut and paste onto an index card.

Healthy Snack

Remember Apple Butter? It's still around in the grocery store with jellies and peanut butter. Serve it with saltines or another cracker. The little bit of saltiness of the cracker compliments the sweetness of the apple butter. As the children spread the apple butter they are practicing their fine motor skills.

Suzi Jamrog is Southwest Regional Representative for ECA of FL and the Director of Pumpkin Patch Preschool, Port Charlotte, Florida. She can be contacted through e-mail at Susan_Jamrog@ccps.k12.fl.us or at Charlotte Vo-Tech, 1-941-255-7500.

Attention: ECA of Florida 1997 Conference attendees!

If you received a CEU certificate from Valencia Community College, you will need to fill this out and send it in with the certificate when applying for your CDA renewal.

Waiver Request Form

CDA Renewal Candidate: Please complete this form if you fail to meet one or more of the Renewal Requirements as outlined in the CDA Renewal Procedures book.

Early Childhood Education Reviewer: You may use this form if you fail to meet any of the eligibility criteria to serve as a Reviewer for a CDA Renewal Candidate, as outlined in the "Information for the Early Childhood Education Reviewer" book.

Name of Person Requesting Waiver ____

Social Security # ______________________________ Date ______________________________

Setting Type:

_____Center-Based Preschool _____Center-Based Infant/Toddler _____Family Child Care

I request a waiver as ☐ Early Childhood Education Reviewer ☐ CDA Renewal Candidate

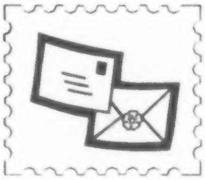
List below the qualification(s) you do **not** meet:

List below any qualifications you wish to substitute:

Please explain any special conditions:

Daytime telephone number of person requesting waiver ______________________________

The Jackson County Association of Child Care has merged with the Calhoun/Liberty provisional affiliate to form the **Panhandle Association for the Education of Young Children.** Ruth Baker is the first President of our new ECA of Florida provisional affiliate.



Dear Readers,

Since Valentine's Day has passed, this thinking can be used for any holiday.

Last week I went to my dermatologist. He is an enthusiastic parent of two children, ages six and three. He wanted some advice. "When I was a little boy in school, I remember that my teacher brought in a box that was decorated for Valentine's Day and we all put valentines in it. Then on Valentine's Day someone was chosen to be the mail caller, and delivered some of the valentines. Then another person had a turn, and so on. It was lots of fun, and I still remember it. Do you think I could bring in a box decorated for Valentine's Day to my daughter's class as my project and suggest to the teacher that she do this?" This is my reply.

First of all, I admire your interest and desire to be involved in your daughter's school work and education. I believe you loved school and are proud of your education, and want your daughter to feel the same about her school experiences. You remember what you did in school and want to bring a lot of those experiences to your daughter's classroom.

There are many different ways of learning. I believe you want to bring in a box with materials for the children to decorate, and then have it serve as a mailbox for children to "mail" their valentines to each other in the class. When it comes to valentines, I have a worry. When I was little, we had a box in the room decorated, and a child delivering the valentines to each person whose name was on the envelope. There were 26 children in the class. Some children got 26 valentines. I got three. Others compared how many they got with each other. It became a popularity contest.

Those of us who are serious about schooling believe that having fun is fine, but must not be the primary goal of any planned curriculum experience. If fun happens as a by-product of engaging in the experience that is great. Not all learning is fun; nor does it have to be. The primary reason for having children involved in any experience in any classroom is for the children to learn MORE about a topic they are studying. A good teacher prepares children to study a topic by providing many different ways of exploring that topic. Her goal is to develop in children a desire to learn more about what they already know. Another goal might also be to learn something about which they know nothing! She wants her children to develop a sense of curiosity, of discovery, of exploration and excitement about learning, and finding out about what they are interested in.

It's great! It's like solving a mystery. You take what you already know and then add more knowledge to that, and you become an expert on something new. What do you want your daughter to learn about Valentine's Day? Is this a topic worth exploring in depth? Will she be richer and be able to use this knowledge immediately and in the near future?

Some teachers never ask themselves this question. They simply plan an entire year of work by looking at the calendar and "making" artifacts that symbolize that holiday. It's called the Holiday Curriculum, celebrating eleven holidays in nine months. Many of these teachers have the same artifacts year in and year out for the children to make. They cut out pumpkins, turkeys, wreaths, hearts, clovers and bunnies. Aside from the fact that these are stereotyped symbols, often not understood by children, not all children celebrate these holidays.

For Valentine's Day discuss how that mail gets to them. How many children have been behind the counter of a post office to see how the mail is sorted and distributed? How does it get to their mailbox? Have they ever spoken to their letter carrier to find out what you need to know for the job? Why do we need stamps?

Most good teachers advocate first hand experiences. They could plan a field trip to the post office. Children can bring in letters they received from all over the world. Talk about the pictures on the stamp. Write letters to parents, put in envelopes and walk to the nearest post box to mail it. Count the days on the calendar for the mail to be received.

Miriam Silver , Naples, Florida, is Vice President of the Collier AEYC and an adjunct professor at Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers, Florida.

The children can recreate a post office in their classroom with a concrete basis for doing this. They may put up posters and have stamps for sale. They may take turns being a postmaster or a letter carrier. Maybe children can send each other notes, letters or messages.

If the goal really is to learn about Valentine's Day, then I might suggest another approach. What is a Valentine? What does it have to do with a heart? What is a heart and what does it do? How does it work? Can you hear it? Can you feel it? Can you see it? Can you live without it?

Now you have an opportunity to find ways of really making knowledge about the heart become interesting and exciting. With a stethoscope everyone can listen to their heart beat, someone else's heartbeat and count the beats. Find other places where you can feel the heart beat. Make the children aware of their bodies through their senses of hearing, feeling and touching.

There are charts that show a heart. What is its real shape? We can mold hearts from clay (three-dimensional) to simulate a real heart or look at an x-ray of a heart. Read reference books and stories. Provide many different aspects of heart exploration that will add knowledge to their study and more understanding of this vital organ. Ask the initial questions again and see if there has been some deeper understanding of Valentine's Day. It is more than just making a card and sending it.

You may still want to do what you described to me. That is up to you and your daughter's teacher. I am simply giving you another perspective of what I believe is authentic learning, based on engaging children's minds, not just busy work to please the parents, where the children do not add to their knowledge and is often done mainly by the adults. Two great books that I would recommend to clarify what I have briefly described are: *The Project Approach*, by Lillian Katz and Sylvia Chard, and *The Hundred Languages of Children*, edited by Edwards, Gandini and Forman. Both are published by Ablex Publishers.

A little girl asked her mother, "Can I go outside and play with the boys?" Her mother replied, "No, you can't play with the boys, they're too rough." The little girl thought about it for a few moments and asked, "If I can find a smooth one, can I play with him?"

THE
LAWTON CHILES
FOUNDATION

Ms. Suzanne Gellens
Early Childhood Association of Florida
3049 Browning Street
Sarasota, Florida 34237-7307

Tuesday, September 21, 1999

Dear Suzanne,

Thank you for your kind invitation to attend the 44th annual conference of the Early Childhood Association of Florida. I regret that I am unable to be with you because of an earlier commitment, but please know that this letter brings my admiration and gratitude for the outstanding work of your members.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to assist you in recognizing Ted Granger for his dedication and commitment to the well being of the children of Florida. Ted's work at the United Way is a shining example for all of us and I am pleased to participate in honoring his achievements. I know that Lawton would join me in saying that Florida is indeed fortunate to have Ted Granger at work on behalf of her children - he is truly a valiant advocate.

Congratulations Ted on this special day ... now hurry and get back to work! Our kids need you.

Sincerely,
Rhea Chiles

Congratulations to the winners of the ECA of FL raffle drawing for returned conference badges:

- Pat Derryberry, Tampa HECA member (Epcot tickets)
- Kimberly Thomas-Cain, Manatee affiliate President (Sea World tickets)

Classroom Management Tips & Ideas Winners!

Early Childhood Association of Florida is proud to announce our current Tips and Ideas winners. Each has won a book donated by Raab Associates, New Jersey.

Kathy Fitzgerald, a first grade teacher from East Marion Elementary in Silver Springs, Florida, submitted her idea for a "Bat Fact Tree." The teacher reads books about bats to students. Informative facts are discussed. Each child chooses a bat fact. The fact is glued to cut out bats. The bats are hung on a tree upside down. The facts are numbered. Each student writes the answer to their bat fact on handwriting paper with the paper numbered with the corresponding fact. The pages are put in numerical order and a book is made.

Pat Raymond, a kindergarten teacher, also from East Marion Elementary, submitted "Watch Me Grow!" Measure the children from head to toe with red yarn sometime during the first week of school. During the last days of school, measure each child again with blue yarn to let each child see how much they have grown. Send the yarn pieces home in a baggie with the following (original) rhyme:

> Look how I've grown during this last year.
> These pieces of yarn, you'll always hold dear.
> The red one will tell you my height way back when.
> The blue one measures how I've grown since then.
> Each year I get bigger, but don't shed a tear.
> I'll always be proud to be your "little dear."

Classroom Management Tips & Ideas

We'd love for you to send us creative tips and ideas that have been successful in your early childhood classroom. Photocopy the contribution form on this page and jot down your best classroom/teacher tested ideas. Please place each idea on a separate form. Then send the contribution form to: Mary M. Graff, St. Paul's Christian School, 800 SE 41st Ave., Ocala, FL 34471. Ideas may possibly be published in *Children Our Concern*, the journal of the Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc.

Contribution Form

Name ______________________ School ______________________

Home Address ______________________

______________________ Phone (______) ______________________

School Address ______________________

____

Age(s) Grade(s) you teach __________ Name of Idea ______________________

Description of Idea ______________________

Conference 1999 Science Fair Winner

How to Make Your "Mad" Scientist Happy!

"Science" is a major part of everything we do each day. It's as everyday as cooking breakfast, brushing our teeth, and riding to school. With this in mind, we should be teaching science in a natural, involved, and incorporated manner. This is definitely necessary for classrooms with young children. Time and activities should be provided for experimenting, discovering, and enjoying of learning science concepts.

Although I have a "science area" in my classroom, I don't approach science as only an extracted area of study. The science area serves as a center which is an option during the usual center-time activities. The materials available in that area are constantly changing to provide different opportunities for discovery and experimentation. Along with the center however, I provide other opportunities for science concepts to be learned in a more natural setting. In our classroom we incorporate cooking activities, outdoor experiences, art activities, block play and scientific experiments which are related to a specific topic of study. All of these activities usually focus on science concepts in a natural way. Children are discovering what happens when ingredients are mixed for bread dough as they watch chemical reactions and physical changes take place. They are experiencing the basics of physics as they build block structures that are used as car ramps. They are seeing science in nature as they discover red leaves which have fallen from a tree. Children are involved in scientific discovery in everything they do.

The "Mad Scientist" experimenting activity is about as involved as you can get. Children are making choices about mixing various ingredients together. They are learning to record their findings in their minds as they try things over and over again. They are becoming aware of chemical changes and physical changes and are involved in making them happen. During this activity children are problem solving, working on fine motor skills, building memory and, most importantly, seeing that learning can be fun!

Supplies needed for the "Mad Scientist" experimenting activity:

- small containers with vinegar, cooking oil, red, yellow, and blue water, and droppers for each
- small containers with cornstarch and baking soda with small plastic spoons for each
- 4-6 mini-containers with lids (1 for each child)
- magnifying glasses, paper, and pencils are optional depending on age group and interest level

Set up these items on a table during center time and all you will need is eager children!

Donita Franklin is a teacher of four-and five-year-olds at the Preschool for Creative Learning on the campus of the University of South Florida in Tampa.

1999 Conference Science Fair Winners

First Prize: Donita Franklin: *Mad Scientist*
First Prize: Chris Gantert/Sue Dinkel: *Butterfly Gardening*
First Prize: Jenny's Day School, St. Petersburg: *Creepy-Crawly Pit Traps*
Cynthia Wilder-Brown: *Blooming Flowers*
Kathy Vinson: *Test Tube Color Mixing*
Kathy Pagan: *Fossil Cookies*

CHILDREN
OUR CONCERN

EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA

The mission of the Early Childhood Association of Florida is to promote the quality of life, learning and care of young children through leadership, advocacy and professional development of its members in order to enhance their work on behalf of young children and families.

This survey is being distributed to all members of ECA of FL, potential members, and members of related agencies and organizations.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA SURVEY CRITIQUE FORM

ECA of Florida offers many opportunities for professional development for the early care and education community. It also provides various services to its local affiliates. In order to better meet the needs of its members and non-members in the early childhood profession, the Executive Board is asking that you complete this survey on both sides and send it to the Business Office: **3049 Browning Street, Sarasota, FL 34237-7307**; fax: 941-952-0116; email: ecaoffl@earthlink.net.

☐ ECA Member ☐ Non-member

Please identify your professional role (check all that apply):

___administrator/director
___child care teacher 3-5
___kindergarten teacher
___primary grade teacher
___infant / toddler teacher
___child care teacher 2's
___private school
___private trainer
___family child care home provider
___other ____________________
___state agency trainer/worker
___technical institute instructor
___college/university faculty

Please evaluate ECA of Florida's achievements and progress during the past three years on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating "Not at all effective" and 5 indicating "Very effective". Please circle your response.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all effective		Somewhat effective		Very effective

Offering professional development opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Offering opportunities to learn about improving professional practice	1	2	3	4	5
Providing convenient, regular, affordable access to professional information	1	2	3	4	5
Providing a good quality conference with high quality educational resources	1	2	3	4	5

(over)

ECA of FL Survey - Page 1 of 2

Providing an affordable conference	1	2	3	4	5
Providing leadership training	1	2	3	4	5
Providing other benefits (video library, training, grants, scholarships)	1	2	3	4	5
Providing a conference that is convenient – well located and timely	1	2	3	4	5
Providing good quality educational publications	1	2	3	4	5
Providing a good quality educational journal – *Children Our Concern*	1	2	3	4	5
Providing a good quality newsletter – *ECA of Florida FACTS*	1	2	3	4	5
Distributing publications to individual members	1	2	3	4	5
Working to create and sustain a visible presence as a respected early childhood education organization within the state	1	2	3	4	5
Promoting high standards of quality in all aspects of early childhood	1	2	3	4	5
Developing an efficient network to respond to state issues	1	2	3	4	5
Providing an opportunity for members to develop advocacy skills	1	2	3	4	5
Collaborating and networking with other organizations	1	2	3	4	5
Communicating with legislators on early childhood issues	1	2	3	4	5
Making a difference in state policies for children	1	2	3	4	5
Building public understanding and support for quality early childhood education programs for all young children	1	2	3	4	5

Please list any professional development topics that would meet your needs:

Comments:

Thank you very much for your comments and assistance to ECA of Florida.

ECA of FL Survey - Page 2 of 2

Manuscripts Needed

Children Our Concern (COC), a publication of Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc., is looking for articles to publish in the journal. COC publishes articles that provide a balance between theory and practical application. Mail to the ECA of FL business office (see address below).

TOPICS

Manuscripts published by ECA of FL address both the continuing interests of early childhood professionals and emerging ideas and issues in the field. Among topics considered are emergent curriculum for children from birth through age 8, adult education strategies, effective classroom practices that reflect sound theory, program administration, relationships with families, resource and referral systems, and public policy.

MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

Authors are encouraged to submit readable, practical manuscripts that reflect and advance the knowledge base of the profession. Manuscripts should be prepared in APA style (American Psychological Association, 1995). This style includes: typed, double-spaced, wide margins, and cover page with a working title, authors' full names, degrees, affiliations, and mailing address for the lead author.

Length of journal manuscripts ranges from 1,000 to 3,000 words, including references.

Sharp photographs and graphics (children's art work, charts) to support the text may be submitted for publication consideration as well. Releases for each individual pictured are essential. Photos/art will not be returned.

Please submit four copies of manuscripts and proposals to expedite the review process. Upon acceptance, authors are asked to submit the document by e-mail or on disk. Please indicate operating system (PC or Mac) and word processing program used.

REVIEW PROCESS

Children Our Concern contains some reviewed articles. If review is requested, at least three reviewers and the Editor read submitted journal manuscripts to assure that the content reflects ECA of FL positions. The review process is blind to assure fairness, and generally takes about three months to complete. Authors are notified about the status of their manuscript after a decision has been reached. Manuscripts may be rejected, revisions may be requested, or material may be accepted for editing and publication.

EDITING AND PRODUCTION

ECA of FL maintains the right to edit, design, illustrate, publish, and market each accepted manuscript. Manuscripts are edited to assure accuracy, readability, clarity, completeness, and consistency of text and references. The Editor may communicate with the lead author during this process. Lead authors are asked to approve the edited manuscript for accuracy before production begins.

Annual subscriptions are available for non-members and libraries.
ECA of Florida publications: Children Our Concern and FACTS Newsletter $15.00

YES! I wish to become an Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc. member.

Affiliate Membership through your local affiliate. You will receive information regarding dues of the nearest affiliate.

Name ______________________________
Street ______________________________
City ______________ State __________ Zip __________
County ______________ Phone (_____) ______________

Membership includes local affiliation, the Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc., the Southern Early Childhood Association, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

For information on joining the affiliate nearest you, contact:

Suzanne Gellens, Executive Director
Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc.
3049 Browning Street, Sarasota, FL 34237-7307
Phone (941) 951-0606 • Fax (941) 952-0116
E-mail: ecaoffl@earthlink.net
Check our website at www.ecaoffl.org

Purchase ECA of FL's UNIQUE Brain Packet and Activity Book

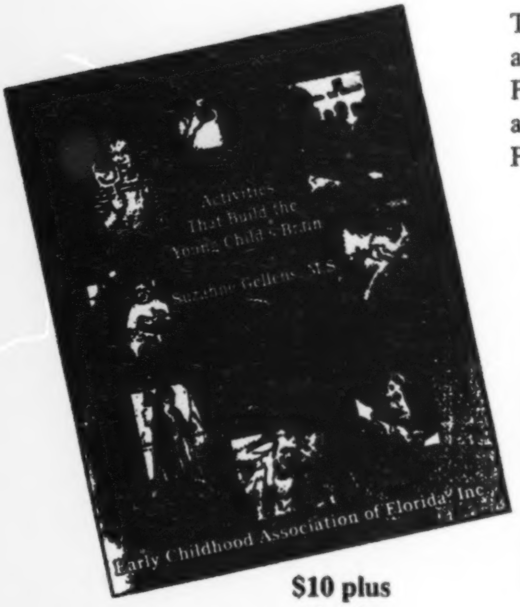
Included in the packet are items explaining the newest research on the child's brain, how the brain develops and the type of environment needed to reach optimal growth to be ready for school. The multimedia packet will be useful for parents and families or anyone caring for young children. Materials are provided for caregivers to share this information with the parents of the children in their care.

Materials Inside the Brain Packet

- **Videos** – *The Child's Brain Matters; The First Years Last Forever; Ten Things Every Child Needs.*
- **Books** – *Activities that Build the Young Child's Brain; Sunrise Skillbuilders; Building Your Baby's Brain: A Parent's Guide to the First five Years.* (Available in Spanish); *Your Child's brain: Food for Thought; Bright From the Start; Windows of Opportunity.*
- **ECA of FL Brochures** (20 of each in every packet) - "Reading From the Beginning: Young Children, Language and Books"; "Developmentally Appropriate Programs for Infants and Toddlers"; "Developmentally Appropriate Programs for Young Children"; "Quality Child Care and Brain Development". Alternate brochures in Spanish when requested.
- **I Am Your Child Pamphlets** - The First Years Last Forever; Quality Child Care
- **Tape or CD Rom** of Mozart or other classical music.
- **Brain Boxes** - Contains note sheets with facts about the brain in a box.

CHILDREN
OUR CONCERN

$100 plus shipping


Activities That Build the Young Child's Brain
Suzanne Gellens, M.S.
Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc.

$10 plus shipping

This book has 350 proven activities to use with children to create an environment that will stimulate young children's brains. Families, classroom teachers, family child care home providers or anyone who spends time with children will find these ideas useful. For example:

Extension Experiences

- Take a known story and write a class version with the children picking the adventures.
- Help children plant seeds in cups or wet sponges. Watch the roots' growth. Put some in sunlight; others in a dark closet. Chart the difference.
- Have old appliances that children can take apart with screwdrivers.

Develop Hypotheses

- Buy and plant a bulb. Let the children guess the height and color it will be. As it grows, chart the development. See how many guessed the correct color.
- Let children develop plans to capture a missing hamster. Actually try their solutions.
- Let children tell what birds eat. Hang bird feeders with the different substances (bird seed, bread, sunflower seeds, nuts). Check daily to see what the birds really ate.

Early Childhood
Association of Florida

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